

Preface

“Growing Pains,” Larsen Legacy Volume 6: 1998-2000 relates our family’s story as Daddy and I recorded in weekly letters the milestones met and challenges tackled. Although these years were conspicuously devoid of any marriage event, the family growth manifest itself with the addition of nine little ones arriving fresh from heaven: Christine, Camille, Joseph, Maddie, Emma, Jared, Tate, James, and Alex.

Occurring simultaneously with this, was the spiritual growth that took place as Mike and Paul served and returned from their missions in Mexico, Colonia Diaz Mission and El Salvador, San Salvador East, respectively, and Tim embarked to serve in the Mexico, Monterrey North Mission. Of special note are the graduations of Tim from high school, Randy from medical school, and Laurel from BYU. Truly family members grew not only in numbers but in “wisdom and stature.”

Despite the distances that separated us, our times together were frequent and reaffirmed our love and support for each other. And as always, overarching our dedication and best efforts was the love and watch care of a merciful and kind Heavenly Father who strengthened us for our daily tasks and opened the windows of heaven to prosper and bless.

Dedication

Dedicated to Daddy. Whose good mental, emotional, and physical health enabled him to distinguish himself in his chosen profession and to unfailingly magnify his Church callings, all the while being a key player in the family circle. His ready smile, gentle ways, and optimistic outlook belied the heavy and exhausting schedule he regularly kept. Despite the stress he was under, he was able to put worries aside and sleep soundly and well each night. And with wonderful consistency he arose early, exercised, and “hit the ground running” each morning. His love for his children evoked in him a sensitivity to their plight when anyone was in crisis and needed extra help and prayers. His willingness to drive to Provo or Salt Lake City, fly to the Midwest, (or pay for me to do the same), rescued more than one stranded and bewildered child and was a great blessing to us all. He was the embodiment of a “righteous patriarch” and this volume, page by page, reveals the love and strength of the amazing person we’ll forever and affectionately call, “Dad”.

Acknowledgements

To Stephen and John for their computer expertise that buoyed me up and bailed me out as this project progressed. To all the kids who provided photos of the mentioned events, making this historical account much more “reader friendly”. To family members who encourage me to find time to “endure to the end” of this Larsen Legacy project. Love to all. Mom

The Larsen Legacy

Volume 6: 1998-2000

Growing Pains

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January 2, 1998

[Mom] The highlights of the holidays for me were the opportunities to be with family. Noticeably absent from our festivities this year were Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. We had several opportunities to visit with them on the phone and they assured us that they would be having some special mission events to fill their holidays with cheer. We missed their annual Christmas party but tried to fill the void by having our own Larsen get-together with Gary and Linda and Rick and Terry and families. We received a sweet letter from Staff and Kathy detailing their situation. They recently sold their business in Las Vegas and have bought a pizza place in St. George. Jennifer and James bought the business in the Provo area and Colleen and Jimmy are both putting in their papers for missions. Chris works in an auto body shop in the Orem area and will be attending UVCC in the fall.

After opening our gifts on Christmas morning, we left for Salt Lake. We arrived about three that afternoon and had supper with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. It was fun to be able to share the holiday with them. Daddy hung some blinds and watched the Jazz play. That evening we drove to Dick and Kathy's. Bret and Danielle were there from San Francisco, Abby was home for the holidays, and Lane's wife, Leslie and her two little boys were also visiting. Kathy and Dick have done extensive decorating these past few months.

Our trip to California was pleasant. The weather cooperated and we didn't have any slick roads or storms. We arrived in Hollister about five that afternoon and easily found our way to Steph and Linds's. They live in a new subdivision in the middle of an area that is surrounded with rolling, wooded hills and beautiful farm land that left us puzzling over what was being grown. We wished we could have had an "agricultural tour" of the area we traveled through; we identified orange and grapefruit groves, fields of strawberry and raspberry plants, lettuce, garlic, and groves of nut trees. We saw immense acreages of vineyards with their labor-intensive racks up and down the rows. We were pleasantly surprised at how agricultural the area was.

Steph and Linds's new home is really beautiful. It's a two-story style that features vaulted ceilings, a spacious kitchen and adjoining family room, three baths, and four bedrooms. We were pleased to share in their excitement and see the yard that Lindsay has put so much effort into. They have sweet neighbors and have been impressed with the warmth and strength of the ward. We were fortunate to attend their ward on the Sunday that they were presenting the program so we got to hear from everyone but Josh. It came as a surprise to us that their ward membership reminded us of a typical Idaho ward and we met many delightful people who went out of their way to greet us. I think of certain stereo-types when I think of California. I told Daddy later that I hadn't seen a single surfboard or sun-bleached head of hair all morning! Maybe they were surprised we weren't wearing bib overalls and chewin' on hayseed!

On Saturday we drove to a beautiful beach, had a picnic, and saw thousands of Monarch butterflies that rest in that area on the branches of trees. Later we climbed along a rock path and hunted in tide pools for star fish, anemones, and hermit crabs. We rolled up our pantlegs and walked on the beach and watched the waves roll in. It was such a treat!

Monday we drove to Monterrey, had another picnic (complete with hundreds of large and very bold seagulls that enjoyed being fed peanuts by the kids) and explored the rocky shoreline before going to the Monterrey aquarium that afternoon. We appreciated all their efforts to make it such a memorable trip for us. The aquarium was an incredible experience with a lot of interactive exhibits that broadened our perspective of aquamarine life and the unseen beauty under the ocean surface.

Tuesday morning Daddy and Lindsay took Tim to Gilroy to shop at some outlets and Steph and I sat outside on the lawn and visited while we watched the kids ride bikes. SaraKay borrowed one of Katie's and even little Josh had a small one with training wheels. Their home is the last house on a cul-de-sac and they have an enormous paved area right in front of their house that is ideal for skating and biking.

Several months ago as we discussed the possibility of making the trip, we wondered about renting a car rather than putting the wear and tear on our Pontiac, but later Daddy

decided that our car was in good condition and that we might as well take it.

Soon after we began our trip from Salt Lake, Daddy expressed concern regarding how the car would pop when we were in the lower gear moving to a higher one. I had noticed it, too. But the longer we traveled on Friday, the more noticeable it became and I could tell that Daddy was worrying about it. By the time we reached Hollister, we were both relieved that we hadn't been stranded somewhere along the way.

When we mentioned the car problems to Steph and Linds, they phoned a neighbor and got the name of a mechanic in the Hollister area. Daddy called our own mechanic and tried to describe the symptoms to him and he mentioned a couple things it could be but said he thought we would be alright until we got back. Despite this prognosis, we decided to follow our feelings and Daddy contacted the mechanic in Hollister and took the car in on Monday. By Monday night we were able to pick it up. We were grateful that we had taken care of the problem and not risked being stranded. We drove straight through and arrived home Wednesday morning about 4 a.m. Daddy let Tim drive for several hours and get some freeway experience.

The only down side of our trip was my allergic reaction to Grendel, the Bennion's family cat. Although she stays outside, the smell still got to me. Lindsay called his father for some medical advice and picked up some medication that helped me breathe a little easier.

Shauntel and Randy spent the holiday with David and Andrea in Plano. Randy's brother, Matt, was being married in the Dallas Temple on December 19th, so they made the trip for the wedding and stayed at Dave and Andrea's through Christmas. Andrea's sister, Heather, also spent the holidays there and so they had a houseful. I was grateful it worked out so they could be together. I imagine it was good for Shauntel and Randy to be able to break away from the pressures of work, school, and the recent disappointment with their adoption. I know Andrea and David reported that they and their girls thoroughly enjoyed having them share the holiday. We were so pleased to get a phone call from Dave and Andrea announcing that they are expecting a baby the last of July!

On Monday the 22nd, Steve and Bonnie arrived from Salt Lake. It was good to have them back safe and sound from their Chicago adventure. It was fun to get to visit with them about the rigors of traveling with three pre-schoolers, a loaded diaper bag, carry-on case, infant seats, and other paraphernalia.

Becky and Chet came on Tuesday night for a family dinner and visit. They left the next morning for Salt Lake to spend the holidays with Chet's family. Becky was relieved to have some time off from school and coaching. She has been struggling with morning sickness the last few weeks and Wednesday Chet called to say that she was dehydrated and a home nurse was coming to put her on IV's and try to get her stabilized. Becky slept most of New Year's Day and was up and feeling better by Friday. Hopefully she has seen the worst of it. She is almost three months along and that is usually when the nausea subsides.

John and Laurel flew out on the 21st for Cincinnati and some time with the McAllister side of the family. They were anxious for a much-needed break from the rigors of school and work and John was applying for internships. They announced that a baby is due about August 22nd!

We received phone calls from our two missionaries prior to Christmas Day. Mike has recently been appointed as an AP and is working in the office. He is enjoying his mission and bemoaned how quickly it's drawing to a close. I tried to talk over arrangements for school for fall of '98 but he said he'd deal with it when he got home. He has already received word of acceptance and a scholarship so he can register when he gets here in May.

Paul sounded upbeat although he has been sick the last few days. He is enjoying his companion and getting a better handle on the language. All in all, we've had a wonderful holiday. Daddy is busy cleaning and organizing his office. I'm feeling grateful for another year passed, good health, money for our needs, and a sweet family.

[Dad] Tonight we celebrated the fifth birthday of SaraKay's Giga pet and I'm so grateful that it's food and waste are just electronic! No allergies or asthma! I found out why it sleeps all day and

keeps waking SaraKay up to feed it at night—the clock is PM when it should be AM.

Jonie and Jeff spent the weekend in Fargo, ND with Alex. He is still in a premie care unit, up to 4 pounds 4 ounces, and is breathing on his own. They hope to be able to transfer him to Bemidji soon.

I am reminded again at Christmas time of the mission of the Savior and His great gifts to us. We usually think of them in terms of “immortality and eternal life” but I think His offer to take up our burdens is one of the greatest gifts—to know that He is suffering with us and willing to share the weight of the problems of this life.

I sat in testimony meeting today with tears streaming down my face because of the strength of the Spirit and the love for the good people in our ward. This was also accentuated as I pondered our experience in the Hollister ward with Steph and Linds and as I shared letters from Paul and Mike with the High Priest’s quorum. I can’t comprehend what our lives would be like without the gospel. Though it is often difficult to understand why we have to go through some of the things we do in this life—I know that we can trust in the fact that God does indeed know each of us!

I have been thinking about the divine genetic code we inherit and the nature of the spirit that inhabits the physical tabernacle that our earthly parents provide. Children are so resilient and can survive a great many mistakes and problems in their childhood. Every moment and decision is not of mammoth proportions. I don’t mean to infer that we don’t have to worry—we should be concerned and try our very best. But, we should also relax and be more tolerant and understanding.

One of the thoughts that I’ve had lately has been a discussion with my mission president, Joy F. Dunyon. He said that to understand our relationship with our Heavenly Father, we need to examine and understand our relationship with our earthly parents. Conversely, to understand how to be a good parent, we need to study how God deals with his children—and follow His example. We shouldn’t do anything that is inappropriate or a putdown or sign of physical aggression. Everything we do should

build up, improve, compliment, or reaffirm our love and esteem.

January 12, 1998

[Mom] I’ve heard that some people get depressed in January because they don’t have anything to look forward to but it is just the opposite for me. It is a wonderful time of “gearing up” for the months ahead. I enjoy updating my photo albums, cleaning out a drawer, or thoroughly cleaning my kitchen cupboards. Daddy wants to do some painting in our bathroom and bedroom so that project will have to be addressed before we hit all his Wood Badge sessions. He has recently completed the task of lining up his 15 staff members and is excited about the group of men he has called together.

Last week a 39-year-old father from Idaho Falls was killed in an avalanche while snowmobiling in Island Park. He was the brother of one of our good friends, Rick Tew. Whenever something like this happens, I think of the devastating effect it has on the young family, and I’m grateful that we have been spared this kind of sorrow. I remember after Uncle Nate lost Trent how he anguished over him. One time he commented to me, “If we grieve so much over death, shouldn’t we rejoice more over life?”

Jonie called the other day and said that they had received the call from Fargo and they were leaving to go get Alex. He is only 4 lb. 4oz. but Jonie is quitting her job so she can be there to care for him.

Before they can bring him home, they will get the training they need. He is still a fragile bundle. I’m grateful that Jeff has some flexibility in his job and is such a capable father. I thought about them this morning when the weather report said that that area is going to have temperatures of -15 during the days and -25 at night, -50 degrees with the wind chill factor. I hope Jeff and Jonie can stay warm. I know that they have a freezer full of meat and fish from Jeff’s hunting and that they have rice they have harvested themselves. I’m so proud of their efforts to provide a good home and living for their family.

Much of the Northeastern area is without power for several days and the National Guard is trying to locate families that are stranded and without adequate food and fuel. All of us should have

enough supplies on hand to make it for a few days without access to stores.

I mentioned last week that Becky has been sick with morning sickness. She called last night and said she has had a few days that she felt human again. It's been a challenge for her to keep teaching and coaching. Hopefully Andrea and Laurel are getting along okay and don't have too much sickness to deal with.

When I got home from aerobics this morning I got a call from Randy's mom, Marilyn Archibald. She visited with me about their experiences in Dallas with the wedding and the chance to see Shauntel and Randy. She said that they only had six from their side of the family for the wedding and that it meant so much to have Shauntel and Randy there.

She also commented on the experience they had at David and Andrea's home on Sunday. They were invited for dinner and spent part of the day in Plano with them. She said that there was such a sweet, peaceful feeling in their home and that she would like to know how they were able to create such a spiritual atmosphere. I thought that was a very sweet compliment.

Another comment she made as we talked through what Shauntel and Randy have experienced the last few months was that she didn't know of any couple who were any more deserving of the Lord's blessings than they were. Her exact description of Shauntel was, "As far as I am concerned, she could walk on water!" That was quite a compliment coming from a mother-in-law!

[Dad] Much of the last week has been involved in putting the "Trails" together. I sure appreciate Rick and all his help. As I took the proofs to Pioneer Press yesterday, I was really proud of the way the paper looked.

One of the high lights of the week was going to the temple with Sue on Friday night. With the meetings I had on Friday we were really cutting it close for the 5:00 session. I have been reading, "Undaunted Courage," by Stephen Ambrose which I received for Christmas from Steph and Linds. It is about Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the opening up of the western United States. The insights into the times and culture around the 1800's is really interesting. For example: "A critical fact in the world of 1801 was that nothing moved faster

than the speed of a horse; no human being, manufactured item, no bushel of wheat, no side of beef or any on the hoof for that matter, no letter, no information, no idea, order, or instruction of any kind moved faster. Nothing ever had moved any faster and as far as Jefferson and his contemporaries were able to tell, nothing ever would."

"The people took it for granted that things would always be this way. The idea of progress based on technological improvements or mechanics, the notion of a power source other than muscle, falling water, or wind, was utterly alien to virtually every American." Henry Adams, in writing about conditions of the time observed, "Great as were the material obstacles in the path of the United States, the greatest obstacle of all was in the human mind. Down to the close of the eighteenth century no change had occurred in the world which warranted practical men in assuming that great changes were to come."

How true that is even today. The greatest obstacles in our paths are those of the mind. The power of our imagination and will, drawing upon spiritual powers from on high, can accomplish virtually anything.

January 19, 1998

[Mom] Last Thursday we got the "Trails" out for the last time! The last few times that we have prepared the mailer, Daddy has recruited the RSVP Club of Idaho Falls to help. Before that we had used some local scout troops and all the neighborhood kids, but after they had helped us a few times, some of them were not too excited to do it again.

For the most part, RSVP's membership is comprised of retirees. They are organized to assist non-profit organizations in the area and do a variety of services for them. They receive funds for their group based on the hours of service rendered. The members who have helped us have been such sweet people and genuinely interested in strengthening the community and contributing to it. It has been very heart-warming to mingle with them and they have been such a boon to the scouting program as they have helped label and sort 7-8,000 newsletters quarterly!

I read a talk some time ago by a gentleman who spoke about volunteerism in America. He said

that this country was made great because of its citizen's willingness to give of their time and means to worthwhile causes without always having to be paid for it. He said that unless this spirit of philanthropy continues, we are at risk of losing many of the fine programs and opportunities that we enjoy. I had never thought much about volunteerism but I realized how much our family has benefited from it over the years including scouting, Little League baseball, Jazz Basketball, Fine Arts Club, Blackfoot Music Assoc., church functions, PTA, School Board, and political involvements.

We who are raised in the Church are raised with a "service" ethic and many times we don't realize how much that permeates our daily activities. I remember when Sergio Prado was getting married and his mother came from Chihuahua to prepare for the reception. As I sat and talked through with her some ideas for the dinner, she kept saying, "How much will that cost?" When I told her that there was a group of us that would help cook and serve the wedding dinner, she inquired, "How much do I pay you?" When I told her it would be held in the Moreland building, she asked, "How much does it cost to rent the hall?" The longer we talked the more amazed she was that so many people were willing to do so much for her and her son without thought of compensation. She was so grateful and appreciative and did her best to even the score every time she came to visit thereafter.

We had an interesting experience with Tim last week. The Chamber Singers scheduled a Ricks College Showtime Concert for Saturday night at the school auditorium. They were each given 25 tickets with the assignment to get them sold since any \$\$ over \$900 would be given to them for their upcoming tour expenses. Tim is quite the salesman and he got busy and soon had sold 21 tickets. When Friday came and each person in Chambers reported on their sales, most of the kids hadn't done much. Tim really got after them and issued a challenge that if any section outsold the basses, they would treat them to Subway sandwiches.

Well, I guess his challenge fired up the soprano section and Friday afternoon Tim got a phone call asking if he had any tickets left because the sopranos had sold so many they were gathering up left over ones and getting them sold, too.

Tim's surprise at this news was surpassed only by his concern that he would have to pay up. It was fun to see him squirm a little especially since he had issued the challenge without consulting the other basses first and he wasn't sure how they would feel about it.

To make a long story short, Tim and the basses took the sopranos to Subway after the concert Saturday night. The upside of it was that they had an unbelievable turnout to the concert and the whole event was a huge success!

Friday night Tim hosted a party for his friends. I agreed to let him if he would clean his room, help make goodies, and shoo them out by 11:30. We fixed bean dip, bought some chips and pop and the group arrived, video games in hand. Three hours later after video games, darts, a wrestling tournament, and sundry other totally male bonding experiences, I yelled down the stairs that it was time for them all to go home. (Pretty subtle, aren't I). Since they hadn't totally completed the wrestling tournament, they convinced me to let them stay another half hour and then head home. I was upstairs reading a book and could hear all the noise and commotion and wondered if I was going to have a family room left. They were making all those noises that Tim Allen makes on Home Improvement and I had to laugh about what a great time they were having. When midnight came they bundled up and went home and I finally got some sleep. I have wondered since that time if I'm getting older or if boys are getting louder. I guess I ought to be grateful that Tim has such nice friends even if they are a rowdy bunch. I guess I also ought to be grateful that as yet most of them aren't too interested in the girls. The only thing worse than a boisterous party of boys is a suspiciously quiet party of boys and girls, if get my drift.

Jonie called last week and said that Alex was home and prospering. Becky's bout with morning sickness seems to be diminishing. John has decided to go for a dual Master's in Engineering and MBA. Some of you may have heard that his bishop has been called to serve as president in the Italy mission. Wouldn't it be fun if Curtis was in his mission!

Steve has been really sick and thought he had an abscessed tooth but when he went to the dentist the x-rays didn't show any problem so the dentist gave him some antibiotics and a

pain killer. By Saturday he was doing better. The dentist suspected it was a sinus infection.

Do you kids remember a similar experience I had while we lived in Buhl? I had been suffering with a toothache and made an appointment with a Dr. McClusky. When I arrived at his office it was the eeriest place I had been. It was in an old, dirty building and everyone in the waiting room was about 70+ years old and wearing dentures. (Mind you, that alone didn't make it eerie.) When I was called in to sit in the chair, I couldn't help noticing how dirty the tray for the dentist instruments was and when the dentist walked in, he looked like the mad scientist! He began examining my teeth and making notes about removing one here and three there and so forth. He suggested that following the extractions I would need several partial dentures. (Refer to description of patients in lobby) All of you know how polite I usually am and I would definitely rather "switch than fight", but something about the situation didn't ring true and with as much courage as I could muster, I pardoned myself, took off the bib around my neck, grabbed my purse and high-tailed it out of there! When I arrived home, breathless, I called another dentist who I had initially tried to make an appointment with and pleaded my case. He laughed knowingly at my near-death experience when I related my McClusky encounter and worked me into his schedule that very day. Upon examination, he discovered I didn't even have a tooth problem. I had a sinus infection. And to think how close I came to letting Dr. Frankenstein extract half my teeth at the tender age of 28!

January 26, 1998

[Mom] I am typing this letter on a new computer that was delivered Friday night and has been dominated over the weekend by Tim and Daddy as they have been trying out its new features and playing the game, "Myst".

We have had a relatively mild winter this year and it has been nice to get around without fighting icy roads and bitter cold. We are trying to get some inside work completed before spring arrives and the pressures of yard and garden begin. Last week Daddy painted his bathroom and today we are starting on the big upstairs bath. It's amazing what a coat of paint will do!

Another project I have been chipping away at is putting all our photos in archival safe covers. I have gone through old photo albums, removed pictures, and secured them in new "pocket pages" that I ordered from Century Plastics.

As of last Friday, we have acquired a little violin for SaraKay. She has a friend, Angela Winder, whose mother plays violin in the orchestra. A few months ago, Angela told SaraKay that if she would get a violin, her mother would give her free lessons. When SaraKay told me about the conversation, I called Colleen to confirm the story and she said that Angela had lost interest in taking lessons alone, but she thought that with SaraKay taking with her, maybe the two of them would enjoy it and be motivated to practice. She suggested that I contact Kerma Hill whose three young sons had taken lessons several years ago and asked if she would be interested in renting out her spare violin. I also contacted Susan Tripp in Blackfoot who has over 30 violin students and asked her if she knew of any half-size violins that someone might be interested in renting or selling. She called me back the next day and said she had an instrument she thought would work for SaraKay and that she would drop by en route to a lesson on Thursday.

When she came, she measured the violin to SaraKay's arm and showed her how to hold the bow. She left the violin here and said that she would check back in a few days and see if we decided we wanted it. We are going to Kerma's today after school to check on her's and see if it would work.

Ever since Susan left the violin SaraKay has been playing it. She has played it for everyone who comes to the door and about drove Daddy to distraction over the weekend playing the same four notes over and over again. Her first lesson will be this Thursday so hopefully she will learn some new notes.

I am feeling pretty apprehensive about the whole thing since I can't help much with my limited exposure to any stringed instrument. I'm planning on sitting through her lessons and maybe that will help me grasp what Colleen wants her to learn and I can reinforce that at home. I definitely don't want her piano to suffer because of this but her piano teacher didn't have any reservations about it and felt that if

anything the two instruments would reinforce each other.

I feel like I'm standing at the bottom of Mount Everest contemplating the assault on the slopes and it makes me tired just thinking about what's ahead. I have felt that way about her piano, too, but I keep pushing myself to not lose heart before I'm through getting her raised. I remind myself that compared to the "good ol'days" when seven of you were taking piano lessons, this is a piece of cake! We'll keep you posted on how we're doing and maybe sometime when you phone, she will even play a little tune for you.

Steve spent the week on a job in the Los Angeles area. Christine is starting to sleep through the night and life is getting more manageable for Bonnie.

Last night David called and mentioned that Randy had been there en route to Galveston for an interview. He said that Laurel and Angela had loved having "Prince Bob" come visit again. In a later phone call Shauntel explained the title. When she and Randy arrived in Plano for their Christmas visit, Andrea had them sleeping on a hide-a-bed in the family room. They arrived very late one night and Andrea told the girls that Shauntel and Randy would be there when they awoke in the morning but that they were not to awaken them, but let them sleep in for as long as they wanted.

Shauntel said that about eight the next morning she opened her eyes and spotted Laurel sitting quietly near the doorway, watching the bed for any sign of life. The minute Shauntel raised her head Laurel came running over to her and began filling her in on all the fun they were going to have playing dress-up and princesses. About that time Randy started rousing and Laurel, anticipating his involvement too, said, "And he (pointing to Randy,) can be Prince Bob!" Little Angela arrived about that time and so for her the name Prince Bob was official and remained for the duration of their stay.

An interesting coincidence occurred two weeks ago when Shauntel went to the Chicago Temple and happened upon Deniece and Curtis in the temple lobby. They were going through together for the last time before Curtis would enter the MTC. Shauntel had no idea they would be there and when she first spotted Deniece across the lobby she could hardly believe it was her, but

she was sure enough that she proceeded to get closer and confirm it. What a special experience for both of them.

[Dad] It is really different to be able to sit here at the computer composing a letter and having the CD Rom playing music at the same time. It has been fun to contemplate, shop for, and buy a new computer. With all the features they have now, the speed, and the declining prices, it is incredible what you can have in your home in the way of computing power.

Last night as we finished painting the big bathroom ceilings and doors, I couldn't help thinking how good things looked after 15 years of intensive use by a large family. Also, you don't realize how bad things are until you get into working with them and putting on a fresh coat of paint. The next projects are the laundry room and small bath. And then on to the master bedroom.

February 2, 1998

[Mom] I'm in a wonderful time of life. I enjoy good health and have the time to get things done. I have especially enjoyed having my own desk and the time to sit down in the quiet of the day and think through what's going on and how I want to approach it.

This past week was especially gratifying as Daddy and I completely cleaned and painted the laundry area and three bathrooms and our bedroom. It took a lot of late nights but by Saturday night we were able to move back into our bedroom and get the washer and dryer hooked up. It's amazing how hard it is to find a block of time in which to take on a big project. It makes me realize how much chasing we do. I'm in awe of Daddy's ability to tackle any task, figure out what needs to be done, and then move ahead and do it down to the last detail. It would be difficult to assess just how much we have saved in the last 32 years of married life because of daddy's skill at being a handyman.

I remember a conference talk given by L. Tom Perry in which he encouraged us to be self-sufficient and learn to do things with our hands. It put me in mind of a conversation I had with my dad about surviving the Depression. He said that money was scarce and that a family learned to produce what they needed including food, clothes, honey, vinegar, furniture, etc. I

have thought many times that we would be hard-pressed if that were the case today.

Another bit of advice that I read in the new Ensign was that we should develop hobbies that we can do at home. Interesting thought. Before I leave this topic let me refer to a documentary we watched last night on Lewis and Clark. At one point on their journey, Merriweather Lewis had a birthday and turned 31. In his journal he reflected on his life and made the observation that it was a great sorrow to him that he had wasted so much of his early years and that he couldn't help but wish that he had used his time to prepare for opportunities that had come to him.

Last Wednesday I made plans to spend the entire day painting. About 8:30 one of the women I walk with called and asked me if I would like to help her neighbors move that morning instead of walking. She said that they didn't have any help and she knew they could use some. I agreed to go over but I was begrudging giving my time. When I got to the Davis' and saw the work to be done and that they were all alone, I repented of my previous feelings. Sister Davis is about 75 years old and moved into our ward about three years ago from Star Valley. She moved here to be near her daughter, Penny Hyde.

Soon after she moved her granddaughter, Jill Hyde, who had received a heart transplant when she was about 10, started having heart problems, and the whole family was caught up in going back and forth to Salt Lake where Jill was hospitalized.

Over the course of the last two years, the father of the family moved to Salt Lake to be close to the hospital and Penny stayed behind to keep her job here. It has been a marathon for the entire family and Sister Davis has been mother, father, home-away-from-home at times for the other children, and helped in whatever way she could.

Eventually they released Jill from the hospital but she has to be close at hand since she may have to have another transplant. So, the decision was made to move to Heber. Sister Davis was just getting adjusted to her new home and neighbors and now she was moving with Penny to Heber while the father and two younger children stayed behind to sell both

homes. I was so glad that some of us women were able to be on hand and help move beds, boxes, fruit, and do a lot of the deep cleaning. They were so appreciative and I was grateful to be of service.

SaraKay said that I should let the family know that she had her first violin lesson last Thursday and got along fine. I went with her and tried to absorb everything so that I could reinforce it here at home. Colleen Winder was very sweet and patient and it was touching to see the way she introduced SaraKay to her violin and taught her how to care for it. The hardest thing was having SaraKay and Angela in the same room and making sure that they stayed on task during the music lesson. They both were so excited to be together that they wanted to play. We had to set some rules. On the way home, SaraKay was feeling a little badly about not getting to play. As we talked things through, she came up with her own solution. "I know what we can do! Angela's mom can be in charge of music lessons, and we can be in charge of fun!" It sounded good to me so tomorrow night Angela is coming for a couple hours to play. Hopefully we can please everyone with a good balance.

Our New Beginnings Program is tonight. Bonnie's sister, Shannon, is our guest speaker and she will be talking about family relationships. I heard Bonnie's mom give a similar talk at Rick's College Women's Week and thought it would be a wonderful way to introduce our theme for the year, "Turning Hearts to the Family". Let me say in closing that my heart is constantly turned to each of you and your challenges and triumphs. We love you and pray for your health, safety, and success.

[Dad] As I read Sue's letter and realized how much the painting meant to her, I was grateful that I kept to the task last week while she had meetings. We still have a little touch up, a couple closet doors and some baseboards to do, but it sure makes the house seem cleaner and newer to get that painting done. With the work we did last time and this we will have repainted virtually the whole upstairs.

It looks like we will be going to New Orleans the first weekend of April. There is a national School Board convention that the District sends the school board members to. For very little additional cost, I can tag along and we can have an enjoyable trip together. It should be fun!

For home evening we watched a video presentation about the Lewis and Clark expedition. I don't remember ever being aware of the hardships the members of that Discovery expedition endured. It was also interesting the many coincidences that occurred that kept them alive or facilitated their travel. I felt reassured of the divine providence behind the exploration and settling of America—from coast to coast.

As all the news last week whirled around the President (Monica Lewinsky) I couldn't help but think that if he had stayed in Scouting longer instead of "flunking" out as a Cub Scout, he might have had a stronger set of moral values impressed upon him and his conduct and influence and history might be much different.

There was a survey of men and boys in America and the influence of Scouting. Men that were registered in Scouting for five years or more were extremely positive about the influence it had on their education, success and values.

We became aware of an incident in a quorum meeting where a young man was frightened and intimidated because of a threat to have to read in front of the whole quorum. He has a learning disability that his quorum leader was unaware of, and he bolted and ran. I felt that Safe Haven is such a crucial concept and recognized how much difference an attitude and understanding of providing a safe place in Scouts and in our quorums would make. It is so important for us to teach this to our young people as well as our leaders. Church meetings should be a place where everyone feels physically and emotionally secure. There should never be any kind of inappropriate name-calling, put-downs, or physical aggression. It is so easy to thoughtlessly put someone in an awkward position—emotionally or physically.

February 9, 1998

[Dad] This weekend was special as we spent time with Steve and Bonnie, John and Laurel, and Grandma and Grandpa Richards. It was the annual Scout dinner in Salt Lake honoring all those professionals who have qualified based on membership growth figures at the end of the year. It was a wonderful dinner at the Joseph Smith Memorial building and Sue and I really enjoyed it. We stayed the night at The Inn at Temple Square.

Sunday morning we got up at 5:00 to drive home and take care of our responsibilities here. I hope you can all follow Nathan's example. He really knows how to make Grandpa feel special. Friday night he gave me a big hug and said, "I love you, Grandpa!" Saturday morning during breakfast he said, "Grandpa's my buddy!" What a smart, intelligent child with a proper sense of what's important in this life!

With this weekend being Valentine's, I hope you all know how much I love you. I also hope you husbands will tell your spouse's how much you love them, and remember them in some special way. I like the following quote about love: *"Love is a great thing, a good above all others, which alone maketh every burden light. Love is watchful, and whilst sleeping, still keeps watch; though fatigued, it is not weary; though pressed, it is not forced. Love is ... sincere ... gentle, strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, manly. Love is circumspect, humble, and upright; not weak, not fickle, nor intent on vain things; somber, chaste, steadfast, quiet, and guarded...."* (Thomas a' Kempis)

Richard L. Evans said, "All things need watching, working at, caring for, and marriage is no exception. Marriage is not something to be indifferently treated or abused, or something that simply takes care of itself. Nothing neglected will remain as it was or is, or will fail to deteriorate. All things need attention, care and concern, and especially so in this most sensitive of relationships of life." My marriage means more to me than life itself. It took me a while to realize how important little things are in maintaining and strengthening that relationship. I hope you know how important Sue is to me and how much I love her.

[Mom] Wow! I just got my treat for Valentine's Day after reading Daddy's sweet words. Hopefully each of you will take time to make the day special for your spouse. We are so grateful for each of you! After spending an enjoyable time with Steve and Bonnie Friday night, we left Saturday morning for Provo. As we traveled Daddy and I visited about the stage of life we are in and the opportunity to drop in and out of your lives and see how things are going. It would be hard to put a price on the joy we receive from seeing our family grow and mature. It is a blessing that each of you can financially provide for your families.

FYI: Steph and Linds are in the midst of all the flooding and mud slides in California. They are grateful that they purchased a home that is on a small incline and that Linds meticulously installed a drainage system that carries the heavy rainfall through pipes around to the front of their property and into the cutters so that they do not have puddling and erosion in their yard. Many in their ward are struggling with flooding and 30 homes in the bay area have been destroyed by flooding and mud slides. The worst isn't over because continuing rainy weather is predicted for the weeks ahead. They have had some time without power and activities canceled because of the flooding and have been grateful they had things on hand to "weather the storm".

Randy has completed the interviewing process and now has about a month to wait until selections are made. His top five choices are in Columbia, Missouri; two in Texas; Iowa City; and in Indianapolis. He has received some letters of encouragement from some of these choices so he feels like they were excited to have him in their program and probably will make an offer. When the final papers are in, Randy will be assigned a place and the wondering and waiting will be over. For the present, Shauntel said they are both pretty excited and anxious to get word and know where they will be living for the next few years.

Steve and Bonnie have included a letter that chronicles last Sunday and the ups and downs of parenting three pre-schoolers. I'm sure you'll get a laugh out of it. We enjoyed our time with them and could see how much easier things are for them now than when Christine was a newborn. I keep telling them that each day will be better than the last as the kids get older and that life is hardest when there are so many demands and only two parents.

Andrea's granddad passed away two weeks ago and she flew to Denver where her mother picked her up and drove her to Laramie and then on to Provo for the funeral. She called just before leaving and let us know what was going on but said she knew time would be limited and she wasn't going to have her own car so she couldn't make any plans. Sunday morning John and Laurel got a call and she arranged to make a short and sweet visit with them before flying

out. They were pleased since Andrea had never met Laurel.

When I heard about the visit, I realized that there are several of you that haven't met her yet and I realized how much has happened in the last few years and how many changes have occurred. We express our love to Andrea in the loss of her grandfather.

Becky and Chet played surrogate mom and dad to Tim while we were in Utah. They invited him to come Saturday afternoon, have supper with them and attend the girls' varsity basketball game that night. Tim jumped at the chance since he thoroughly enjoys both of them and they always have fun things to do when he goes there. Becky's ball season finished up last week and she is looking forward to being able to go home after school and get off her feet. Chet recently received a promotion that will require him to travel but they are hoping that some of those trips can involve Becky. They are busy getting baby furniture purchased and things in readiness for the baby.

John and Laurel are in the process of lining up an internship for summer. John's sent several resume's out and is hoping to have one lined up when he finishes his classwork in April. Laurel is enjoying not having school to worry about and has continued working at the MTC and at another part-time job. It was interesting to find out that Laurel works at the MTC with Frank Vandersloot's daughter from his first marriage. Frank is the president of Melaleuca; the company Chet works for in Idaho Falls.

Mike and Paul are both doing well. Yesterday in testimony meeting (we were delayed a week because of a mission farewell) Daddy told a couple of missionary experiences that we had read about in their letters. Before the meeting was over, several other missionary parents had also related experiences their sons were having and it was interesting to see how many small miracles happen to bring people to the truth.

Tim has been busy with school and activities. He got his date to the Valentines' Dance and seems to be happy about that. He is doing well in school, enjoying playing church ball, and tolerating his Jazz team. He had hoped to get on a team that did well, but his team is so inexperienced that they have a hard time and he gets frustrated with it. Tonight he has Honor

Society induction (he is V.P.), tomorrow a stake dance, Friday a church game, Saturday Jazz and vocal lessons, and the list goes on.

SaraKay enjoyed being with us in Utah. She had an offer to go with a friend to their family cabin in Star Valley for the weekend, but she didn't want to miss the chance to go visiting with us. She really enjoys her nieces and nephews as well as her brothers and sisters and she spent some time alone with Grandpa and Grandma Richards while we attended the scout banquet. She and Grandma played games and she saw a different side of Grandma than she normally does. When we arrived about 9:30 to pick her up, she was sitting with Grandpa watching a Red Skelton special and laughing at all his antics. It was a memorable experience for her and one she will remember in years to come. It was good to have some time with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. Their apartment is so lovely and they enjoy the association with the other residents in the building. Grandpa said that he hasn't been able to become as acquainted because of his limitations in getting around, but everyone in the building look out for each other and that is worth a lot.

This morning I got a call from Aunt Lisa. I thought she was calling to announce the birth of a new baby but she was calling to see how Mom and Dad were doing and to talk through some things about that. She feels quite helpless to lend a hand and wishes she lived closer and could be there for them.

Daddy left this morning for Boise and I am going to meet him there tomorrow afternoon for my school board's annual "Day on the Hill". It is the day we meet with legislators from our area and lobby for legislation favorable to schools. I didn't go last year so this is a first for me and it just so happened that a convention that Dad was invited to attend dove-tailed with mine so we are going to get to share this experience. The district pays for a night's lodging and meals and Daddy will just extend his stay a couple days and join with me.

I have been thinking about Grandpa Larsen and all the good work he did for our state as a legislator and Speaker. How I wish he was going to be there tomorrow to visit with and make us feel at home. I never go to Boise that I don't think of the years he spent there and the fine reputation he had among the people at the

capitol building. Whenever we meet some of his former associates, they have such high praise for him and his accomplishments.

It started snowing a few minutes ago and it's made me wonder if Daddy has run into any inclement weather en route to Boise. Yesterday while coming home from Salt Lake we hit stormy weather and bad roads over the Malad Pass but the rest of the way it was unseasonably nice. With each passing day I know spring is that much closer and it feels good to know that we have adequate snow in the mountains and we haven't had to battle it here in the valley.

February 16, 1998

We've had a restful and enjoyable day today. After our marathon of last week, all I wanted to do was stick close to home and catch up on several projects that needed attention. Luckily, the rest of the family felt the same and we were able to have a quiet and productive holiday.

We received a phone call last week from Jonie telling us that she was in Fargo with little Alex again. He caught a cold and it turned into pneumonia and they life-flighted him to Fargo where they have facilities to care for him. Jonie spent the week there and Jeff and the girls and Nora came over on Friday and they all returned yesterday. Alex seems to be better and they are hoping they can keep him well. Jonie has been grateful she's had time off from her job to get Alex past these first critical months. I'm also grateful for Nora's help.

Last week I had opportunity to attend a day at the state capital, visiting with local lawmakers about educational concerns and legislation. It was especially enjoyable to have Daddy there with me since he knows so much about how things run and he was able to be a great guide and companion for the day. His scouting meetings were held in the same hotel as my school board meetings and he finished up about 15 minutes before I arrived on Tuesday evening. We had lovely accommodations courtesy of the district for Tuesday night and then headed for the capital the next morning to sit in on committee meetings, listen to testimony, observe the legislature in action, and attend a luncheon with our Bingham county legislators.

Tim took care of SaraKay in our absence and we really appreciated him. With the board all in Boise on our regularly scheduled meeting night,

we had board meeting on Thursday. By the time I finished up Thursday evening, I felt like I had had enough school business to last me several months. It gets rather intense at times.

Saturday morning, we attended a temple session with other ward members and saw our home teachers, Brother and Sister Max Twiggs, sealed. Max received his endowments that morning but his wife had been previously endowed. It was so touching to see these two sweet people take this step. Both had been married and divorced previously and through the efforts of many church leaders and friends, they had been influenced to get to the temple.

Following their sealing, Max was sealed to his deceased parents. Following this, we were invited by Richard and JoAnn Tominaga to help them with some sealings of Richards' grandparents and also children to the couples. We arrived at the temple at 6:45 a.m. and didn't finish up until nearly noon. It was such a sweet experience to share with the Godfreys, Acevedos, Belnaps, Tominagas, and President and Sister Clements.

When I phoned John and Laurel Sunday, they mentioned an accident they witnessed en route to Salt Lake on Friday night. A car lost control, swerved and bounced off the cement railing, slid across both lanes directly in front of oncoming traffic, hit a van broadside, and tipped the van over the cement railing on the other side of the overpass and it slid to the roadway below.

John and Laurel were close behind the car that lost control and were very fortunate that they were not tangled up in the accident themselves. John pulled over to the side and got down to the occupants of the van while other motorists phoned 911 and helped the woman in the first car.

Laurel said she worried that John would be in harm's way as he ran to check on the other vehicle. The whole experience left them stunned but grateful. It reminded me of how quickly life can change and how much we need to petition the Lord each day for safety as we travel.

Shauntel and Randy completed their preference list for residency last week after a lot of agonizing and discussion. Both of them have felt ready for a move and change of scenery but

midweek Randy received a call from Iowa letting him know that they would like him to be in their program (one of the top in the nation and to be sure to list them.) This complicated the choice for them but came as a nice surprise that he would get a bid from one of the top programs in the country. It will be nice to have March 18th come and go and know where they are going and what they can expect. The radiation residency is a five-year commitment.

SaraKay is enjoying her violin lessons and can now play Mary Had A Little Lamb, Hot Cross Buns, and French Folk Song. She gets up and practices her piano in the morning and we usually practice violin for a while each evening. Her teacher said that her arm will gradually get stronger and it won't be so tiring once she adjusts to it but for now, she is only supposed to practice about 10 minutes at a sitting. She's enjoying it and has tried to talk me out of piano lessons but part of the deal was that she would stay with piano if I let her do the violin so she is carrying on.

The other day she had a tooth come out on the immediate right of her two front teeth. I had noticed that it made her appear a little strange, but I figured if she didn't notice, I wouldn't mention it. Sunday morning as she was getting ready for church, I joined her in the bathroom and she commented, "Losing that tooth has made me look like a real dufuss!" I don't know where she came up with that word but it pretty much said it all.

[Dad] Mom mentioned our experience in the temple on Saturday—it seemed so appropriate to be there on Valentine's day and enjoy those sweet spiritual experiences with my sweetheart. I am so grateful for the sealing power of the priesthood and the eternal nature of the covenants we make. I am grateful for the worthy lives of each of you and the assurance that we can continue our associations into the eternities.

After the temple experience we dropped in on Becky and Chet for a few minutes to see the new piano they got for Valentine's Day. Chet got a really good deal on a slightly used piano through Bruce Turpin and surprised Becky with it on Friday. Then we had to hurry home for a Jazz basketball game for Tim and I had to stand in as the coach because their coach was out of town. The other team didn't have enough

players so they forfeited the game, but some of the referees wanted to play with them and have a game anyway.

Tim does such a fine job of moving the ball and making things happen on the floor. His teammates are improving and don't throw away every pass he makes to them. He is also getting better at penetrating and getting off a jump shot and making more points.

The night before our Church team beat Riverside 2nd Ward; they hadn't lost a game for two years. Tim had 20+ points in that game and was a critical factor in the win with his three-point shots and foul shots in the overtime period.

Yesterday was a nice break and I got started on our taxes. What a job that is each year, but it is getting simpler as my insurance renewals dwindle down and BSA is my only source of income. I am really getting to appreciate the benefit of all the tax deductions of a large number of dependents. As we have fewer and fewer dependents I watch our tax bill rise.

The meetings that I had in Boise last week were really interesting. I drove over on Monday and had clear roads and beautiful weather for the trip. The Monday afternoon sessions were a) dealing with the media and b) preparing fund raising plans. They were both very well done and informative. The seminar was sponsored by the Boise chapter of the NSFRE--the National Society of Fund-Raising Executives.

On Tuesday, the whole day was spent with a fellow from Washington, D.C. who has had tremendous experience in negotiating and is even an advisor to our representatives in the GATT talks and has written a book entitled "Negotiate to Win." It was a fascinating session with a lot of interesting techniques.

He concluded with a discussion on how to negotiate the best deal when buying a car. I couldn't help but think of how much that session could have saved me over the years. Just realizing some of the psychology and thinking we are subject to because of the way we are raised in a society of plenty where negotiating is almost a dirty word. Most other cultures are very adept at it, particularly the Japanese and Oriental cultures.

It was fun to be in Boise with Sue and to have those interactions with our legislative leaders. I kept thinking about Dad and the time he spent in those circles. I looked up the pictures of the Senate when Grandpa (J. Berkeley) was presiding as lieutenant governor, and the House pictures with Dad in and presiding as Speaker. It made me proud of the rich heritage I have of involvement in the political processes of making this great state what it is.

[Tim] I figured it was time to write another family letter. Yesterday I had a shooting competition. You shoot with a partner and my partner was Ryan Jenks. We had won the area competition and the thing we went to yesterday was the regional competition. I wasn't doing my best but luckily Ryan was. I think he only missed two shots the entire time and that's what saved us. We ended up winning with a really good score. Now we have to wait and see how the teams from Nevada, Utah, and Montana did and if we're in the top three, we get to go shoot at halftime of a Jazz game.

For the most part things are going well around here. There is an occasional day that leaves a little to be desired. An example was a day this last week. We got out of school at 10:00 because of district wrestling so my friends and I were looking forward to a day off to have some fun. We were all psyched to go play basketball at the gym. When we arrived, the volleyball nets were up. Mom had told me that if we were going to take them down, we had to be sure we put them up correctly because she had been walking when Randy Cox had taken an hour and a half to put them up.

We thought we knew what we were doing and after about a half an hour of trying to get them down, we finally found a way. With a shout of joy and a bounce of the ball we began to shoot around. We had shot around for literally only about ten seconds when Randy Cox walked in and was really upset that we had taken them down. We were instructed to put them back up that very second even though we had only had them down long enough for one or two of us to shoot the ball.

We helped him put them back up and realized that we could go to the other church to play since one of our friends' dad was the janitor there. We arrived to the other church and knocked on the church doors. Soon the janitor

came to the door and we asked him if we could play basketball. He said enthusiastically "Sure, go right ahead, I'll hold the door open for you for when you leave." Obviously, none of us understood until we reached the gym doors and looked inside, only to find that a wedding reception must be going on that night because there were tables and decorations everywhere. We realized his joke then and walked back out, with him still standing at the door holding it open for us.

We discussed the options of what we could do and someone mentioned that Albertsons was having a special: "Rent one video game, get one free!" We decided that was the best option and soon arrived at Albertsons. We got the games and went up to the check stand to check them out. The lady said "You don't have a membership here so you can't get them." My friend said "My mom has a membership here." She replied, "Since your mom isn't with you, you can't." He said "Well can I talk to Steve, the manager, he knows my mom really well."

Soon Steve arrived but when asked if we could rent the game responded "Not unless your mom is with you since she has the membership here." I felt like we were on a Visa commercial where the clerk is your best friend but won't let you make a purchase because you don't have identification.

Steve left and we all stood there, dejected. Our hopes rose however when the clerk said "I could let you rent the game if you had some collateral. I asked if we could give her a shoe or something like that but she said, "The only way I can let you rent these games is if you bring me 75 bucks." We thought this was ridiculous but went to a nearby bank anyway and withdrew the money. Upon returning, I brought the games up to the check stand and after having a friendly conversation with her found that she was a teacher's daughter-in-law at our school.

I thought this was neat and all but got down to the real business of renting the games. I said, "We got the 75 bucks, so can we get the games now?" She answered, "No, you have to have 150 bucks for both games." I answered "What? You said 75 just before we left." She said, "Yes, but after you left I found out it was 150 bucks instead of \$75. I said "You have got to be kidding me! How is any kid supposed to rent a video game here, it's not like their parent is

going to say "Here's 150 bucks, go rent yourself a video game!"

At this point she got on the phone and asked for management to come down. I stood there confident, thinking I had gotten my point across. Soon management arrived but this time it was not Steve, the previous manager who came down, it was a different manager named Rod or something like that. However, he was Spanish I think so somehow that name doesn't fit. Anyway, back to the story, the manager came down and I was thinking the price would be lowered because of my convincing speech. However, much to my surprise, when he arrived the woman said, "This boy is harassing me!" I was aghast to say the least. The manager replied angrily "If you are going to harass, you can go elsewhere!" I couldn't believe that the same woman I had had the friendly conversation with about how her father-in-law was a teacher at our school would be charging me with harassment so I responded, "She's only kidding, right?" She answered angrily "Do I look like I'm kidding?!!!"

Obviously at this point she did not look like she was kidding. Then the store manager said "Hey, we don't take harassment here so you can go get your video games somewhere else!!!" We were all deeply silenced as we walked out of the store with the friendly motto "Albertsons it's your store!" No one said a word until suddenly one of my friends yelled out, "WHAT A GREAT DEAL, RENT ONE VIDEO GAME GET ONE FREE FOR ONLY 150 BUCKS!!" We got the games for slightly less at Great American Video when we each put in 50 cents to get them. Well, that's the end of the story. I better not write any more or mom will have to put two stamps on each envelope. So, besides an occasional day, things are going good around here. Well, I better go. I would appreciate your feedback on the incident. Tim

[Mom] I appreciated Tim's rehearsal of last Wednesday's events. It proved to be a frustrating day for me too, worrying about six 17-year-old boys on the prowl. I got up that morning thinking that I was going to have a quiet day mending clothes and cleaning the TV room. A few minutes after I returned from walking, I called Pam Watson to check on some YW business and she ended the conversation with, "I better let you go. I just saw Tim and some friends headed home."

I wondered what was going on and within minutes the Toyota pulled into the driveway and the boys jumped out. I hadn't known that school was being dismissed because of hosting the district wrestling competitions and when I asked Tim why he hadn't mentioned it before going to school that morning, he said that he wanted to surprise me! Well, from there the day went downhill with Tim and his friends trying to have a great time and being stymied at every turn.

Yesterday at dinner we were visiting about the upcoming Sweetheart Ball and Tim asked me if I would consider cooking dinner for the group instead of them having the expense of going to a restaurant. As we talked about the schedule for the date, we realized that based on the outcome of a Thursday night church game, Tim might have a Friday night game, too. We kept discussing how to work around basketball, have dinner and make it a memorable date.

SaraKay finished up her meal and disappeared and wasn't participating in the discussion. As we visited about what Tim wanted served and what his buddies would provide, SaraKay entered playing her violin. I commented to Tim that perhaps he would like to hire SaraKay to provide romantic music for the dinner and I would get some candles to complete the mood.

The look on his face as SaraKay scratched out "Hot Cross Buns" left little doubt that Tim wasn't pleased with my suggestion. "On second thought," I quickly added, "Maybe you could pay her not to play at the dinner!"

I can't really remember when I first had the idea that I would like SaraKay to learn to play the violin, but the economics of it seemed to make it out of reach and I put it aside. I guess I must have mentioned it once to SaraKay and she immediately picked up on the idea. I worried that even if I could afford it, I didn't want to water-down her piano lessons.

Several months later she returned from school one day with the announcement that if she could get a violin, her friend, Angela Winder's mother, would give her free lessons. I felt like the hand of the Lord was in it and so I moved ahead, securing an instrument and setting up a time for lessons. It has worked so well. Instead of taking time from piano it has added time to the usual music practice time and reinforced SaraKay's knowledge of notes, timing, etc.

I pick both girls up at 2:50 on Thursday, drive them out to Colleen's and the lesson is completed before her older children arrive home from school. I try to be consistent with getting the girls there on time and we don't dilly-dally when we are through and take more of her time than she can afford to give. Both girls are about equal in their abilities and are keeping pace with the weekly assignments so one isn't a drag on the other. It is sweet to see them sit side by side and play together.

As we completed the lesson last Thursday Colleen followed me out to the car and expressed appreciation for sharing this experience with her and Angela. She said that she has always wanted one of her children to follow in her footsteps and play the violin but one by one the kids have grown up and none had any interest.

Angela is her last child and although Colleen was trying to influence her to practice, it just wasn't working. Having SaraKay join the lesson has brought some regularity and motivation to the situation for them and Colleen commented that the lesson time was the high-light of her week.

It pleased me to hear that since I have felt self-conscious about getting the lessons free and didn't want to take unfair advantage of her. All the way home I kept thinking about how many times in years past I have felt the Lord helping us provide you children with opportunities for music lessons and how grateful I am that both Colleen and my prayers have been answered with this arrangement.

I will have to say that the first few weeks playing on the open strings, SaraKay's tone was so beautiful but now that she is learning to hold down the strings to form other notes, the scratchy, terrible tones that you envision from a beginner are what we are enduring. Last night she and I played a game with each of us seeing who could play the most beautiful "E", F#, and other notes. One time my note was so horrid that all we could do was have a good laugh!

Tim is taking a few lessons to prepare a number for Crawford Cup and he is feeling better about the sound he is getting. It's been so fun to see how much difference some instruction can make and the confidence he is building as his tone improves. I don't think his singing will ever

be as important to him as his ball playing, but it has certainly broadened his horizons and helped him get through some tough times.

We've spent several evenings these past two weeks watching the Olympics and cheering on the US teams. Probably the highlight for me was watching the women's hockey team receive their gold medals and the final competition between Lipinski and Michelle Kwan. They are both such amazing skaters!

I am excited about Utah hosting the games in four years and the opportunities it will present for people to get better acquainted with the Church. I've been grateful for President Hinckley's trip to Africa and can't help but admire him for his tireless efforts to visit the members of the Church and encourage them.

I know that Mike is excited since his mission is going to have a visit from President Hinckley in March in preparation for the building of the temple. That will be a wonderful event for Mike to culminate his mission on. I need to close. It's time to get going on supper. SaraKay is due home in a minute. Life is good. The weather is sunny. The cars are all running. Daddy's job is good and we are enjoying a time of happiness.

[Dad] A week ago we went to Snake River's first District BB game in Pocatello and watched them finally beat Bear Lake by ten points. On Friday, they handily beat American Falls and tonight they play Preston for the District Championship and the opportunity to go to State. During the season they split with Preston, so this game could go either way.

Becky and Chet came for home evening last night starting with a wonderful supper that Sue prepared. Supper was especially romantic as we were serenaded by SaraKay and her violin as she played "Hot Cross Buns," "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and "French Folk Song."

We then did an exercise that SaraKay had brought home from Primary that was fun and informative about Book of Mormon prophets. Then Chet and Becky gave a demonstration on Melaleuca products and their program. It was really informative and low key. I think we will probably sign up and utilize their excellent phone rates and products. We will probably use some of their products for gifts as well, to introduce them to you.

I was able to finish up our taxes over the weekend and we should be getting a little back from federal and state. We had an inordinate amount of medical expenses last year and with almost 25% of our income going in donations, the itemized deductions really add up.

We have made some changes in Tim's room—we drained the water bed and replaced it with a twin bed. Also, we made a deal with him regarding all the clothes being tossed on the floor and now we can walk in on carpet and not worry about tripping in the dark when I go in to wake him up. He has been going to leadership class and is wondering about running for a Student Body office.

Last Friday we were able to have Bonnie come for dinner and visit for a while as she was on her annual getaway. She spent some time with her mother and was going to her sister Shannon's from here. Tim was gone to a Peer Helper seminar and so we had a nice quiet dinner for four and visited while we watched some of the Olympics. I am so impressed with the spouses our kids have chosen and appreciate the depth and diversity they bring to our family.

March 1, 1998

[Dad] What a red letter week this has been! We have been so thrilled for Shaunnie and Randy and the addition to their family of little Camille. Our prayers have been full of thanksgiving and our hearts have been lifted with their good fortune. We know life has been much different for them since they drove to Chicago to pick her up. They have still been central to our thoughts and prayers as Randy has his medical Board exams this week. We are looking forward to flying out in May for graduation.

Friday night and Saturday was my first staff development for Wood Badge. I am so pleased with the qualities and spirit of the staff as we met together for the first time. It is such a privilege to be associated with outstanding, dedicated Scouters in such a worthy cause. I just hope we can fill the course with eager participants.

One of the big days this week was supposed to be Wednesday with the Regional Endowment counsel coming in from Tucson to work appointments with me. There was record breaking snowstorms hitting Salt Lake and he was stranded there on Tuesday night.

Wednesday, he ended up driving to Nevada to get a flight out and head back home. It really messed up my plans for the day.

We did some calendaring tonight for the next few months and I don't know how we are going to do everything. Hopefully, taking it a day at a time we will be able to do all the traveling and be everywhere we are supposed to be and I can still have a day or two a week for my work.

Last Thursday was the annual council business meeting of the executive board. We awarded five James E. West Fellowship awards and recognized some people who had helped the endowment fund of the council and also gave a report of the last year's accomplishments.

A thought I would like to share was penned by William James, one of America's greatest psychologists, over 90 years ago: "Most people live, whether physically, intellectually or morally, in a very restricted circle of their potential being. They make use of a small portion of their possible consciousness, of their soul's resources in general, much like a man who, out of his whole bodily organism, should get into a habit of using and moving only his little finger. Great emergencies and crises show us how much greater our vital resources are than we had supposed."

For the next couple of days I will be staying at Snow King in Jackson for our annual staff planning conference. Each staff member has a presentation to make and mine is about anthropomaximology—a study of why some individuals so far outperform others. Peak performers are not born—they are made. They are not superhumans with special talents—they are average people in every walk of life. They are not workaholics—they are committed to excellence rather than activity. Peak performers exhibit six primary characteristics.

1-They are motivated by a sense of mission—a desire to excel in achieving something uniquely one's own that one cares about deeply, and simultaneously to excel in achieving something important to others (one's organization, team, or family).

2-Peak performers are people who approach any set of circumstances with the attitude that they can get it to turn out the way they want it to—regularly. They achieve results in real time, measurable goals within time frames long and

short, which move them closer to completing their mission.

3-Peak performers need less supervising than other people as they rise to the call for creative thinking and high performance. Their power of self-management dramatically emerges as the skills of problem solving and information seeking are exercised by self-directed people thriving on the fact that they are accountable for the consequences of their behavior.

4-They develop the leverage that comes from teamwork by extending the force of their convictions to others. Collaboration to multiply individual efforts by providing assistance, backup, and cross-fertilization is prized and utilized.

5-They follow the concept of a critical path to the target of their objectives. They maximize their use of mental agility, concentration, and learning from mistakes to help them make necessary course corrections.

6-Peak performers recognize the need to manage change. They never stop learning new skills. They make their own luck. They see change as a source of opportunity they can guide through learning, training, experimentation, and integration.

Alexander Hamilton said, "Men give me credit for some genius. All the genius I have lies in this; when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I have made is what people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

[Mom] Daddy left this morning at 6:15 and will be gone until Wednesday evening, getting back just in time for us to celebrate our 32nd anniversary. It doesn't seem possible that we have been married that long! I was thinking yesterday how much easier life is right now than it has ever been for us. I'm sure a lot of the reason is that our income is steady and the demands on us in terms of children are less. It has been very satisfying to see our family growing and maturing. One advantage of getting older is that I am becoming more tolerant of others and more aware of my own shortcomings. I really appreciate Daddy's patience with my idiosyncrasies and failings and can think of nothing sweeter than living out my life with him at my side.

Daddy commented on Tim's games last week. He had two church games and they lost both by less than five points. It was really disheartening to come so close and not be able to pull it off. Their last game was the same night as Tim's big date to the Sweetheart Ball and he had an activity with his date right after school, took her home, changed and went to the game, came home and got dressed for the dance, picked up his date again, came here for dinner, went to the dance, and then to a friend's house to play video games on a big screen TV. His scheduling was too tight and he was late getting to his game and got there after the first quarter and his team was down by 17. They worked hard and one time were tied up but they just couldn't do it and were eliminated.

Despite the disappointment of the game, I think he had a great time at the dance and was glad that he had gone to the trouble to get a date. It was fun having his group here for the dinner.

Earlier in the week we took most of them with us to Pocatello for district basketball tournament. Snake River had been favored to win either first or second place, but Preston beat us out for first and Soda Springs pulled an upset and we were eliminated from the state tournament, too. By the time the week was over we felt like the losing-est fans around! To make matters worse, Tim's Jazz team on Saturday lost by 1 point. The upside of it is that ball is almost over and we can now give our time and attention to other pursuits.

We have been so excited about Camille's arrival. I've tried to envision the events of the past week. getting the phone call, going to Chicago to pick her up, the ride home studying her every move, the first bath, the sleepless nights, the visitors and phone calls, and the quiet moments of holding her and marveling at her beautiful features and form. There is nothing quite like a newborn to renew our appreciation for life and its wonderful possibilities. What a blessing for Shauntel and Randy and for our extended family. I hope despite all the hub-bub, that Shauntel is writing down some of the experiences they are having and taking lots of pictures.

When I called her last night, she sounded happy but tired. She was going to go to bed and try to sleep while Camille was down. I'm sure she will have some wild times once she starts work

again on Thursday but thank goodness it will only be for about 6 weeks until Randy finishes up his year. We send love and congratulations!

Laurel and John have had a busy week with the arrival of her family for her Grandma "A's" funeral in Salt Lake. She had been hospitalized for several weeks and was ready to go. We extend to Laurel our love and sympathy at this time of loss. I'm sure that it was a treat for her to have her parents able to come and spend some time with them.

In closing I wanted to mention some insights I gained this week through an experience I shared with Tim. At the jazz game on Saturday Tim's team had fallen behind about 20 points by half-time and it looked pretty dismal for them. When they came back out for the second half, Tim started hitting his shots and within the third quarter they tied the game.

The other team was doing a lot of heckling and trash-talking and Tim was feeling a lot of pressure. One of the boys on his team (Colin) was making a lot of foolish mistakes and within the last minutes of the game had thrown the ball away several times, missed some passes, and I could see Tim talking to him trying to coach him. I worried about it because this boy just didn't have much ball savvy and was feeling the stress of the occasion.

With seven seconds left, and us down by one, Tim got the ball and headed for the basket. Colin had run down the court and was nearly under the basket in easy range of a shot. Tim spotted him and let fly one of his famous, on-the-mark passes that would have put it in Colin's hands with no defenders anywhere close. The only problem was that Colin wasn't watching and the ball flew his way and bounced off of him and out of bounds with only two seconds left and the other team having possession.

When the game was over, I saw Tim say something to Colin and all at once the tears were flowing. I was watching the drama from the bleachers and could see Tim trying to console him. As we left the gym, Tim proceeded to tell me what had happened and how he had hurt Colin's feelings by criticizing him for failing to watch what was going on. He said that he had tried to make things right with him and Colin said he was okay, but Tim's conscience was bothering him and he couldn't dismiss it. He was

really troubled by the whole incident and later after returning home I heard him on the phone with him again apologizing and trying to make things right. The incident haunted Tim and he wrestled with it the rest of the day. Although I felt badly about the situation, I was touched by Tim's sensitivity to his teammates feelings and also pleased that Tim would agonize over it and try to make it right.

As I thought about the incident, I thought about my own life and about how many times in the heat of the moment or when I'm tired and discouraged that I have made poor decisions and lived to regret it. Maybe the Lord views me as I viewed Tim. I was sorry he had been hard on Colin, but touched to see his remorse and efforts to repent. Maybe the Lord sees my mistakes and feels badly that I have made them, but when He sees my sorrow, He understands and loves me all the same. More importantly, He forgives me and holds out to me continuing hope and eternal reward. It gave me a new perspective on the process of living, experiencing, and repenting.

We are expecting word from Mike any time now as to when his release date will be. He mentioned in passing that it might be May 26th but we have hoped for sooner so as to get him in the job market sooner. I just sent off his housing deposit yesterday with the required \$250 deposit and mentioned to Daddy that it was time for Mike to get home and start depositing \$\$ instead of us withdrawing it.

Thank goodness we had left some cushion in his account to cover this kind of expense. When I think of all the upcoming financial needs, I get a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach, but I know that the Lord will help Mike find a way to do what he needs to do to get back into school and get on his way.

He received word that his scholarship is renewed for another year and we were grateful for that. He is rooming with three other returned missionaries, one from the Chihuahua Mission that he has grown close to over the last two years. Mike will be living in Park Plaza on 9th East, a few blocks down from John and Laurel. I guess it remains to be seen whether John and Laurel keep their present apartment or have to forfeit it by leaving for an internship if one comes through. It will be fun for Mike to have some family close.

SaraKay cornered me the other day and made me count the number of days Mike would be staying here after his return from his mission. She is so excited to have him home and a part of things here. I'm looking forward to it, too, but I know from past experience that he may be living here for a few months but he won't be content until he's back in Provo.

In closing let me express my love to each of you. I rejoice in your efforts to do what is right and I must admit that I worry some about the challenges each of you face. Once in a while when I find myself preoccupied with a concern for one of you, I have to remind myself that each of you know what is right and you know to turn to the Lord in your hour of need and rely on Him for comfort and direction. Needless to say, my prayers ascend in your behalf; but those prayers are coupled with a confidence born of experience with each of you that you are strong and capable and able to cope. I feel like a great step forward has been taken with the arrival of Camille. We dedicated our fast last Sunday to giving thanks for this miracle.

March 9, 1998

[Mom] It doesn't seem possible that spring is on the way and another school year is almost over. We have had so little miserable winter weather that I don't feel like we "paid our dues" this year but I'm not complaining! I guess the California coast paid dues for all of us with the terrible storms they've had.

In less than a month Daddy and I will be flying to New Orleans for the National School Boards Convention. Last year it was held in Anaheim and I didn't go but this year all the Board will be attending and taking our spouses with us. We were able to get a round-trip fare for just under \$200 for Daddy and we figure that both of us can eat on the food allowance they provide for me. We just couldn't pass up the opportunity to get away and have fun seeing a new part of the country. I've got a lot of arranging to do to make sure things are cared for here as far as SaraKay and Tim are concerned, but hopefully we can make this trip without too much expense and hardship on anyone.

On the 14th of May we will be flying to Iowa to be with Shauntel and Randy at graduation. We just hope Camille doesn't change too much in the next two months before we get there!

Steve and Bonnie are spending the week getting ready to leave for North Carolina on Saturday. If things go as planned, they will return the first week in June. Steve said their living situation is a good one with a ground-level apartment and carport just outside their front door. There are three bedrooms and plenty of space although they have decided to not take quite as many things as they did when they went to Chicago.

I was thinking yesterday that maybe we will set a record next week for having the most family in the most places. Steph in California, Shauntel in Iowa, Jonie in Minnesota, Steve in North Carolina, David in Texas, Becky in Idaho, John in Utah, Mike in Mexico, Paul in El Salvador, Grandpa and Grandma in Arizona and Utah and Idaho. That's pretty amazing. I doubt we will ever beat that! Better still; let's not try.

We spent Saturday afternoon with Becky and Chet. Daddy needed some genealogical information off of the computer we sold them. I had a yummy recipe for teriyaki chicken I wanted to try and they provided the rest of the meal. Becky is feeling much better and able to control the nausea with medication.

Tim interviewed on Saturday for the opportunity to attend Boys State in June. We were excited to hear that he was selected although it wasn't quite as competitive as it usually is. I guess there were four contestants and four spots so everyone that applied got to go. We had gone to so much effort to fill out his application and had done several mock interviews to prepare him for the real one that it was a bit of a let-down.

The night before his interview I went over several sample questions with him and possible answers including, "What do you think is the biggest problem facing our country today?" and "Name our state senators and representatives." When he returned home from the session with the veterans who run the Boy State program, we asked him how he had done. He recounted some of his answers and commented that he really "expounded" on some of the things we had coached him on the night before. It's a little hard to imagine him expounding on anything in front of a panel of judges.

[Dad] SaraKay is excited about the number of little nieces running around everywhere, but I'm beginning to get concerned about the ratio of nieces to nephews. We are delighted with our

Grandchildren and think they are grand and the prospects of having fifteen of them before the year is over is quite overwhelming.

Much of last week was spent in Jackson Hole for our annual staff planning conference. We stayed at Snow King and ate at exotic sounding places like "The Rifle Barrel" and "Jedediah's". Some of the group went skiing for several hours one afternoon, but I chose not to use that opportunity to learn to ski. My presentation on anthropomaximology went over very well. We had presentations from Hart Bullock, the Area 2 Director, and Boyd Ivie, a retired Scout Executive and former Area 2 Director. They spoke to us about the direction of career opportunities with BSA, dress for success, and using your time wisely.

We spent quite a bit of time going over the Council Calendar for the balance of this year and for 1999. We also spent time backdating-setting dates and deadlines for recruiting, agendas, flyers, etc., based on lead time needed for various events and activities. It was a very useful and productive time.

One afternoon we spent a couple hours in a team-building activity at the local bowling alley. I started off great with gutter balls and just about falling over every time I tried to throw the ball. The group I was with was on the outside lane and one time when I threw the ball I lost my balance and jumped over the gutter and caught myself against the wall landing on the little walkway going down to the setters. I did get a spare that time and everyone got a good laugh. After all was said and done, I received a trophy for the best single game with a score of 158. Not too bad for not having bowled for a hundred and thirty years!

March 16, 1998

[Mom] Tim and I are leaving in a couple hours to go to ISU to a concert for Paul Elison who has been Tim's vocal teacher for the last couple of months. He is presenting his senior recital tonight and invited us to come. Although there are other things pressing, it is important that we support him and so we are going to have a short home evening and then leave for Pocatello. Tomorrow Tim is performing at District Solo Festival in Malad. He has been working on a piece for several weeks and has really surprised himself and us with his ability. Paul has helped

him learn to breathe and relax and it's made such a difference in his tone.

We taped an accompaniment to his songs and each evening we spend time going over his numbers and practicing the techniques he's learned at his lesson. He is planning on performing at Crawford Cup and is preparing "Old Man River" for the Chambers spring concert in May. It's been a pretty ambitious undertaking and Dad and I are proud of him.

I've had a lot of school board related activities lately and am struggling to keep pace with it all. I've been receiving calls regarding a situation at the middle school that just doesn't seem to go away. Thursday evening before going to the Relief Society activity I received a call from a teacher who wanted to come over and talk through the problems and concerns of the staff.

I scheduled to have him come after the dinner and spent most of the evening worrying about how to respond, how much to say, and what action I could take to facilitate some changes. These sessions make me stressed because there is so much that I need to know in regard to procedure and policy and so little that I can share because of legal restrictions.

Following the meeting I called the school board chairman and we talked things through and he said he would take it to the superintendent the next morning and get some answers. I spent part of the next day wrestling with what I had heard, said, and felt like needed to happen.

Sometimes these situations are not black and white and often there are personality problems in the mix as well. The challenge is "to see things as they really are" as it says in the scriptures. Before the day was over, I had received a call informing me of action that would be taken but no time line. Of course, I couldn't go to the complaining individuals and report because personnel problems are always confidential but in time changes were coming and I hoped the teachers would be patient and let the superintendent handle it.

Sometimes the process makes me feel like a "politician" in that I talk but don't divulge much or skirt some issues because I realize that I know things that I really can't legally share. It's quite a dance we do at times trying to honor everyone's rights and still respond to public sentiment.

One of the advantages of my stage in life is that I have several hours a day to myself and hence can accomplish a lot. One of the disadvantages is that I have time to think and mull over concerns. I remember a time when one of you children was struggling with something and Allan and Alva Lu were visiting with us about it. Alva Lu gave me some good advice. She told me that I had to learn to not worry so much about what was going on in the lives of my children. She commented that if I didn't quit living everything with my children that I would end up just like her!

She was trying to help me realize that constant fretting about things that are out of my control will only bring with it health problems and frayed nerves. I have thought so many times about her good advice. If I get all worked up about some of the challenges family members are facing, I have to pull myself out of it and try not to let it eat at me. But, I'm probably no more able to not worry about each of you than Alva Lu is with her children.

I have been especially concerned for my parents and pray that Grandma will have the stamina to do the work required of her in caring for Grandpa. This is a difficult time for them both.

[Dad] It's the 'ole piano lesson Tuesday and I am helping Tim get off to District and trying to get something intelligible written before I leave for Planning Council meeting in Pocatello. I had a fun time with SaraKay last night as we read Doctor Seuss together, watched an orchestra performing on Channel 10, and identified all the instruments-especially the violins, and generally had a pleasant evening together at home while Mom and Tim were gone.

Last week I did a little leather work as I made some notebook holders for the new Wood Badge staff members like the ones that Steve Baldwin made for us last year. It has been relaxing and satisfying to work with leather again and see how nice a product can come from a few minutes of time with the right tools and finishes.

I also went to a couple "Beading" (not beating) ceremonies on Friday and Saturday nights. I am constantly reminded of the quality of people that go to Wood Badge. It is rewarding to associate with such people and to feel the bonds that develop through our shared experience.

Priesthood and Church associations are the only ones that rival it in my life. And family associations and ties transcend them. How grateful I am for each of you and the depth of love and caring we feel.

Sue and I went to a Relief Society birthday party on Thursday night. Our ward had it set up like a picnic with toy snakes, lizards, and ants on the tables as part of the decorations. The BBQ's were excellent and the comradery with our fellow ward members was great. The Ron Simmons family was the entertainment.

Dad called the other day and it was so good to talk to him and Alva Lu. They are seeing some of their friends leaving to go north for the summer. I just hope they still want to go north in another year and haven't grown to like it too much in Arizona.

Last week I was asked to be the villain in a small melodrama that the ward is putting on to try to involve Ron Mangum more. It undoubtedly was a matter of type casting to come up with me in that role.

March 22, 1998

[Dad] One of the major accomplishments last week was a letter of invitation to every Scoutmaster and Varsity Coach in the council to attend Wood Badge. Sue and SaraKay helped me stuff and sort and get things ready to mail.

Another major project was a meeting all day Tuesday regarding all of our contributors over \$100 and how to best cultivate them and then the organization of a Board Campaign for Friends of Scouting to raise more money.

Thursday was another meeting with my Investment Committee and it was a lot of fun to meet with these men and to see how they are interacting and working together. We met with the representatives of the Trust Department of US Bank and evaluated their performance over the past and what changes need to be made to come into harmony with our new Guidelines.

We went to Utah on Saturday. We stopped at Deseret Industries in Murray where Sue was able to get some things she needed and then we stopped at Old Navy and Ross's in Provo. After that we spent the night with John and Laurel and had a wonderful time.

John was performing with an Early Music Ensemble—an orchestra and choir that presented the Mass in B Minor by Bach. They had performed it at the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption in Park City the night before, the Provo Tabernacle on Saturday, and the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake.

It was an incredible experience! The testimony of the Savior expressed by Bach in this creation was beautiful. I can still hear the Alto solo, primarily accompanied by an outstanding oboe as she sang, "Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us." Followed by the bass solo, "For Thou alone art the Holy One. Thou alone art the Lord. Thou, Jesus Christ, alone art the Most High." Baroque trumpets were scattered throughout and added so much. One of them was Barry Hillam from Blackfoot. It was a little highbrow for SaraKay and Tim, but they were patient and really enjoyed the pie and ice cream afterward.

Another thing we have had to work into our schedule lately has been genealogy or family history class and assignments. That has been interesting and rewarding to feel like we are doing something there. We had a choice visit with Arch and Ilene today and went to Church with them and Sue spent some time going over genealogy with her mother. Mom fed us well and Tim watched an NCAA basketball game with Dad while I took a nap before we came home.

Tim was rewarded with his efforts in voice lessons when he sang at District and received a 1 and was also selected as 1st and gets to compete at State.

Also, Shauntel and Randy will be staying in Iowa for his residency. It is one of the finest programs he interviewed with and we share their excitement to continue there.

Chad has been offered the position of Project Engineer on the Billings, Montana Temple construction project. He will be in Montana by the first week of April and will be working for the same company that is doing a lot of major construction for the Church—even the new tabernacle in Salt Lake—so the opportunities for him will be long term.

[Mom] Tuesday was the music festival and Tim left about 6:30 to catch the bus for Malad. He had worked hard to prepare his solo and I

hoped and prayed that he would have a good experience and that the judge would be kind.

The more I am associated with music, the more I realize how important it is for young musicians to receive positive feedback. I knew that Tim's performance time was at 8:50 and my thoughts were with him as I envisioned him warming up and then performing. He had been a little apprehensive about his accompanist and so we agreed beforehand that he would just stand up and sing and not worry about her; focusing on staying on pitch and in time.

About 2:45 I was in the kitchen preparing supper when I heard someone come in the front door. I was puzzled at why SaraKay was home early. As I walked into the living room Tim was standing there with a "Mona Lisa" smile on his face and a scoring sheet in his hand.

For the next half hour, we sat in the living room as he unfolded the story of his exciting morning including a late bus, a hurried trip in a car, no time for warming up, and the experience of the actual performance. He was ecstatic about his score (1=Superior) but amazed that he had taken first place in the district and would be able to compete at state solo competition in May. He said that as he stood up to perform and began singing, he felt nervous. He was shaking so hard that he could feel the fleshy part of his upper thigh shaking against his suit pants and he thought that he had never been that scared in his life!

Just as he was thinking those thoughts, he remembered that he needed to be totally focused or he would get his verses mixed up and so he pulled himself mentally back into the performance and completed it. The judge was very complimentary and praised him for his "nearly flawless" performance. Tim said that he left the room feeling like he had just played the game of his life.

Later that day when the score sheets were gathered up, he had taken first place! (I told him this was the Lord's way of rewarding him for being such a faithful member of the ward choir.)

We talked about an evening several weeks ago when Tim had been especially down and discouraged and we sat at the piano together going over his songs. We were both wondering if it was worth the effort because he wasn't really improving and that night, I think we were both

ready to quit. Daddy was in the computer room doing some typing as Tim went through his pieces. All at once on one of the notes I heard something in Tim's voice that I had not heard before—a warm mellow vibrato. I stopped and asked Tim if he had heard it. He had. I said, "Where did that come from?" He had wondered the same thing. We tried it again. It was there, sure enough, a new warm wonderful tone that came from somewhere deep inside Tim's body and chose to manifest itself on this especially discouraging evening. I yelled to Daddy who was listening from the office. "Did you hear that?" He had. That night was a break-through for Tim. There would be other nights and other practices less successful but we both knew that if he continued to work that he would be able to capture and command that warm tone he had discovered that night and do well with his upcoming competitions.

Attending John's concert was like stepping into another time and place. I kept trying to imagine how anyone could write that complicated and intricate of music without hearing it with all the voices and instruments in place. It was mentioned in the program that Bach never wrote letters and that his private life remains largely unknown—only his music reveals the intensity of his feelings for the Savior and the Atonement. The entire script for the Mass was in Latin originally but the English version was on our printed program and so we could follow along as the numbers were performed. John said that he fell in love immediately with the music and that it has been a spiritual experience to be able to have it in his life this last semester.

One interesting thing that was mentioned was that although it was composed in the 1700's, it really didn't come into much recognition until the 1840's and has been acclaimed since then as "one of the greatest monuments in western art music."

It was a treat to spend the evening with John and Laurel and have a while after the performance to visit with them about their jobs, the upcoming summer's activities, and their dilemma about housing for the next three years as John finishes up his Masters. They showed us their new car seat and stroller and it was fun to share in their excitement about Laurel's pregnancy. She is doing well and will have an

ultra-sound in April. We were also able to see Laurel's missionary scrapbook which she has been working on the past few months. It was hard to believe that she received her mission call exactly three years ago on April 4th of this year!

Wednesday at noon the phone rang and Shauntel announced that they would be staying in Iowa for Randy's residency. I appreciated her kind consideration in calling me midday since I knew the 18th was the appointed day for Randy to get the news and I was anxiously awaiting the time that Shauntel would be home from school and could call and let me know. She had taken part of the day off to be with Randy when the residencies were announced and so she let me know just as soon as they got back.

I think they both are pleased with the selection. Iowa is one of the finest programs in the US and it is also a compliment to Randy that the people he has worked with for the last four years would request that he be one of the few that would get into their radiology program. Congratulations, Randy. We are looking forward to our trip to Iowa in May and the chance to see this cute baby we have been hearing so much about.

Our time with Grandpa and Grandma was rewarding. I know that this season of their life has a lot of challenges. They have both been so involved in the church and such a force for good in the wards they have lived in over the years that it is hard for them to be newcomers in the ward and not able to jump right in and take part like they used to do. I can feel Grandpa's frustrations with his limitations and I can see the strain on Grandma as she tries to meet each day's challenges. Grandpa is slowly losing his eye sight and can't read for very long without becoming unable to discern the lines. Each task he performs takes a great deal of effort and he is losing his ability to do many routine things. Grandma tries to let him be independent but at the same time offer assistance when needed. It would be easy for them to lose patience with each other.

I had a chance to visit with Mom while we cleaned up after dinner and one of her comments to me was, "I want to handle this stage of our life so that we will have only sweet memories. We have had a lifetime of loving each other and I don't want this time of life to be any different." They continue to teach me.

When I heard the news of the kidnapped missionaries, I felt like my stomach was in my throat. What a frightening experience for everyone! I'm sure it was the prayers of many that softened the hearts of the perpetrators. We pray daily for our missionary's safety and success. Still waiting for an arrival date from Mike. We love each of you and are grateful for you. We're grateful Steve and Bonnie arrived safely and hope they will enjoy N. Carolina. A tornado watch was in effect last week near Charlotte so I guess they got off to an exciting beginning in their new home!

[Tim] I know I just barely wrote but I wanted to tell you about a couple of good things that have happened. I just got a letter in the mail about 5 minutes ago from the Utah Jazz! It told me that Ryan Jenks (my shooting partner) and I get to shoot in a competition for the halftime show of a Utah Jazz game! I couldn't believe it; I am so excited. They are giving me a ticket and two more for Mom and Dad but they'll be out of town. They are also giving us tickets for dinner at Club South! (Who knows what that is but if you eat anyplace with "Club" in the title it's got to be nice.)

Also, this last week was the district solo competition. I had prepared a number but wasn't sure how well I would do because I had never sung a solo before. They only take two basses from each district to state.

As I sat in the room a couple minutes before I was supposed to sing, I looked around and realized that there was a major possibility that the twenty or twenty-five people in the room were going to hear me sing. I had only planned on singing to the judge and that would be tough enough. My pulse quickened and I began to breath faster and faster as if I were running on a treadmill or something. I realized that there was no way I could sing like this so I concentrated on breathing slower.

Just as I was getting my breathing rate down to the right level, the judge said, "Tim Larsen, are you here?" I said yes nervously and began to walk to the front of the room. I introduced myself and my song, and the accompaniment began. My accompanist is a great lady but she does have some problems. The song began extremely slow; it seemed like a train that was stopped and started going and eventually got

going. Luckily the train was up to speed by the time I was supposed to start singing.

It was so cool when I started singing to watch the people that had their head in their hands and the people scrunched in their chairs to sit up and listen intently at the song. However, the energy that was there when I was breathing so hard now seemed to be transferred to my body and I could feel the extra flab on my legs shaking violently. I wondered if people could see me shaking so bad or if it showed up in my voice and by the time I had asked myself all these questions, the song had ended.

The judge was extremely complimentary and I was glad to hear what he had to say. He couldn't give me my scoring sheet because he had to wait until the other basses had sung and rank us to see which two would get to go to state.

Later that afternoon, Mr. Grayson (our choir teacher) got the scores and we gathered on the lawn standing around him waiting to hear what we got. I couldn't wait so I went and stood behind him and looked over his shoulder. I saw what I thought was my name and it had a two by it. They give you a rating 1 being superior and 5 being downright lousy. Well, poor actually. Anyway, I saw the 2 and was extremely disappointed. I couldn't believe it, I thought I had done so well. I walked away dejected.

Then Mr. Grayson said, "Tim you got a 1." I couldn't believe it. I was so happy. I walked over and looked over his shoulder to see that what I thought was my name was a "T"rio of girls that sang. I was happy with the rating but still wanted to get my score sheet back to see if it had my ranking. I looked over the scoring sheet and I got a 3 3 out of 35. I was sitting on the bus reading what the judge had said and also listening to what others got. Then I heard another Bass from our school yell out, "Hey, I got second place!"

I was happy for him but my heart sank because I knew they only took two Basses from each district to state so I knew I would have had to of gotten 1st if I were to get to go. I scanned over my paper once more and to my surprise, up in the right-hand corner it said 1st! I couldn't believe it. I needed it to say something like, Tim, this is no misprint, you really did get 1st place, but it didn't. I thought maybe he was just doodling and wrote 1st or something. Maybe it

meant that I was just the first singer, but I knew that wasn't right. After getting home and talking it over with mom, I finally concluded that the judge hadn't been doodling and that there was a major possibility that I really had gotten 1st. The State list came out the next day and verified what I was hoping for. Well, I better go. I'll see you later.

March 29, 1998

[Dad] One of the highlights of the week was getting some pictures of Camille and her parents. They look like they belong together! She is such a beautiful little girl! We are sure looking forward to visiting them in May.

Sue went with me to Salmon on Wednesday to meet with some people. It was great to have that uninterrupted time together and to talk through a lot of things. We visited with a couple of very sweet people in Salmon. One family, the Cochrell's, have given a great deal of time and energy to Scouting and have some strong feelings about helping Scouting in their estate.

The other person we met with doesn't have any family at all to leave his property to and it may be a possibility for him to give it to the Council and take a life estate-a program that would allow him to continue to live and enjoy his home but when he dies it would go to the Scouts.

Another major event was the second staff development session for my Wood Badge staff on Friday night and Saturday. We had a great time, made a lot of decisions, had some great presentations made in rehearsal for the course, and feel like we are heading in the right direction. After we adjourned on Saturday, most of were able to go to the Fort Hall replica where a basic scoutmaster fundamentals course was going on for the Tendoy district and were able to present the beads, etc. to four of the staff who had just completed their requirements. It was a good opportunity to give the participants in the basic course a taste of Wood Badge and encourage them to sign up.

We had great meetings today; the spirit was really strong in sacrament meeting and some sweet testimonies born. I was especially touched with Farrell Wray's testimony and tribute to his mother. I hope each of you realize how much your mother sacrifices to be there for you and how much of her life is tied up in you

and your families. I am so grateful for a helpmeet of her caliber!

[Mom] We leave for New Orleans on Thursday. We are excited for this opportunity but sorry that we won't be able to be with Tim when he shoots in the Delta Center the evening of April 3rd. He will be leaving the morning of April 3rd with the Jenks' family and have one round of the competition that afternoon. They will enjoy a dinner at the "Club" that evening before the game and then shoot hoops during half-time.

Becky is going to come after school Friday and stay here for the weekend with SaraKay and Tim since Chet will be away on a business trip. I so appreciate her help. We spent home evening on Monday with them while Daddy participated in a Wood Badge beading at the Idaho Falls scout office. Tim and SaraKay performed for them and they were an enthusiastic audience. Tim gets lonely for you older siblings and especially misses the positive feedback and encouragement he needs. Becky and Chet have been very sensitive to his feelings and many a night when Tim needs some one-on-one with someone other than Mom and Dad, he will call them and they are always willing to listen and give some encouragement, praise, and advice.

It was interesting to me that the day Tim won his vocal competition, after telling me all about it, he asked if he could call some of you siblings and share the good news. I appreciated that when he reached you, you were excited for him and gave him a chance to brag a little.

Saturday night was the General Young Women's conference and one of the speakers told a true story of preemie twins who were in isolets. One day one of them was struggling and despite the nurse's efforts, began to slip away. Both parents were there and the nurse ask permission to try something she had heard about that sometimes worked. She placed the smaller twin in the same incubator as the bigger one and within seconds the weaker one had curled up next to the stronger one and her vital signs stabilized. As this story was told a sweet picture of two tiny babies in an incubator came on the screen and it showed the bigger twin with her tiny, thin and wrinkled arm laying over her smaller sister as if she was holding her close. What a touching story about sibling love and power.

I appreciate and love my brothers and sisters and although our lives and personalities are very different, I can honestly say that the love I have for them is constant and nearly unconditional. Whenever I call one of you children and I find out that you have been calling each other and offering support, it touches and pleases me to know that the distances that separate you cannot diminish your love for one another.

Let me mention SaraKay lest she feel slighted. Yesterday as we were finishing up our three-hour block, she came up to me in the hall and showed me some cookies she had received in class. She wanted permission to eat them since she had been fasting. I had another meeting to attend and just wanted her to quit pestering me while I got things finished up and put away. As we walked hand in hand down the hall, she kept asking about eating the cookies and finally I consented to let her sit on the couch by the high council room and eat them while Daddy and Tim and I went in for the setting-aparts.

Following this, Barbara Hansen, who had also been in the meeting with us, saw SaraKay and commented that we must be very proud of her. She said that she was in the classroom when the other teacher handed out the cookies and when it was mentioned that it was fast Sunday the teacher told the children to make their own choice. Barbara said that SaraKay made it through the rest of the class without touching hers. She commented that she is such a joy to teach and that we must enjoy having her in our home. That was nice to hear.

One thing she loves is to have one of us lie on the bed by her as she goes to sleep each night. Lately Tim is her favorite and every night he lies down with her and they talk about life and what's happening in their world's. I usually have to go in and make Tim leave or he would keep her up way too late.

Some nights while she is getting her drink and going to the bathroom he will hide between the bed and the wall and when she comes in and climbs into bed, he will let out a roar and spring from his hiding place and onto the bed. She loves that and, of course, has to reciprocate with screams and such. That's when I come in (on cue) and thank Tim for "settling her down" for the night. I hate to think of how lonely she is

going to be when Tim leaves for college. I know I can't fill in where he leaves off because I get stuck behind the bed and haven't got the energy to spring anywhere from a prone position.

I miss our missionaries. Grandpa Larsen will be celebrating his birthday this week and I am reminded of his life of service to the Lord, his family, and the community. He is truly a patriarch after the order of the great patriarchs in Old Testament times and stands as a fitting example to each of us in the way he has given his life in service to others. How we love and admire him! We are so proud of his accepting the call to serve a mission and know what a tremendous asset he is in the role of "Car Czar" for the mission. We are grateful that two beautiful help-meets have blessed his life and we look forward to the time we can have he and Alva Lu home.

The more we see Mike's friends returning from their missions, the more excited we become to have him home. Paul's letters are upbeat and we thank the Lord that he is in good health and surviving the cultural shock of a new part of the world. One of his good friends, BJ Driscoll is returning from Brazil because of sickness.

April 7, 1998

[Dad] It's great to be home again. We had a great time in New Orleans but it is still wonderful to be home. There is a surreal quality to life when you are traveling like that. One of the hardest things to get used to is the expense of everything you do and the hands that are outstretched for a tip.

Our flight to New Orleans on Thursday was uneventful. We had packed everything the night before and were able to get away on time and give the Reader's a ride to the airport. The school board members we were traveling with were Dale and Kathy Mecham, Dennis and Kanea Leavitt, Steve and Becky Reader, and Superintendent Elzo White. We thoroughly enjoyed our time together!

One of the most enlightening experiences was the plantation tour we went on Friday afternoon. The bus driver kept up a constant monologue during the drive out to the plantation and back about the history of the area and the why's and wherefores of many of the things we were seeing. It was quite an eye opener for us to realize the influence of the Jesuits and the

Catholic Church in the early history of New Orleans. The rights of free men of color and the important role they played as business and community leaders, the role of the Irish in digging canals and the economic motivation for settling New Orleans.

The plantation was extremely interesting. The architecture and design of everything about the house was oriented to keeping it cool. Responsibility for maintaining the levee along the river was an overriding influence in shaping the configuration of the plantations. They were long narrow fingers of land extending out from the river so that the amount of levee was minimized for the amount of land cultivated. There were large cisterns on each side of the house to collect the rainwater and hold it for culinary use in the house. They were elevated so that there was pressure to give running water in the house and cool ice houses underneath.

The floors on the bottom level were designed to be unaffected by flooding over them. Large windows and doors allowed for circulation of air throughout the house. A large veranda was probably where they slept during the summer. Many early versions of conveniences we take for granted were in evidence in the house such as a toilet and a lazy boy rocker.

We saw large ships plying the waters of the "muddy". (Which is very appropriately named!) One of the largest refinery's and a large Cargill grain depot were some of the other sites we visited. From recent documents released from Russia they have learned that the refinery was the #1 prospective target for Soviet missiles because it would so cripple our fuel and manufacturing capabilities.

I spent most of Tuesday and Wednesday with Perry Cochell. We had some great visits with people of substance that should result in more gifts to the endowment fund of the council. The combined wealth of the people we met with is about \$250 million.

[Mom] For home evening last night we had a scheduling session for April and May which included music festivals and lessons, Crawford Cup, student body elections, Randy and Laurel's graduations, Mike's homecoming, a trip to Iowa, the annual Scout Recognition Night and buffet, and YW activities. This morning I scheduled Daddy's trip to the Family History Center for

tonight and then got a call from Ron Mangum regarding play practice for nearly the same time frame. Just after scheduling my genealogy session for tomorrow night, Stanley Williams called to invite us to a planning session for his primary campaign.

One thing that I came away from my New Orleans experience with was a conviction that we as individuals can and must make a difference in our communities. I was so pleased to get a chance to have a wonderful vacation with Daddy and share with him the opportunity to see another part of the U.S. The convention sessions were informative and enlightening.

Last night for home evening Tim sang "Old Man River" and it took on new meaning with the experiences we've had the last few days. We appreciated Becky keeping the "home fires" burning in our absence. It really put my mind at ease knowing that she was here for Tim and SaraKay. We hated to miss Tim's big night with the Jazz but apparently, he e-mailed each of you a graphic account of the evening. It was a night to remember!

April 12, 1998

[Mom] We've had a pleasant but quiet Easter Sunday. Several days ago I received a call from Maren asking if she could come for the weekend. She has been dating one of Mike's friends, Brock Kirwan, who Mike lined her up with several years ago. They have kept up their friendship over the years and now that he is back from his mission, they are dating seriously. Although she spent most of the time with Brock and his family, it was fun to have her here.

I know that part of the stress I am feeling is brought on by the time of year. It seems like as the school year draws to a close that the activity level increases to fit in everything that needs to be addressed. I am especially finding that this is true with my school board work. Parents who have tolerated some situations with programs and teachers want to be sure that changes are going to be made for the next school year and so I have been getting a lot of complaints from the patrons regarding what they want to see happen another year. It is time consuming and emotionally draining to take the calls but I try to be available and willing to listen.

I spent a couple of days last week making an Easter dress for Sara Kay. Several weeks ago

Aunt Terry gave me some dresses that Amanda and Aubrey had outgrown. Most of them were too big but I thought I would try to alter one. I started on the project about three weeks ago but didn't get very far. I was dragging my feet a little because I wasn't sure we were going to like it when we were through.

Friday I was in Deseret Industries looking for a size 2 women's dress heel for Mary Taylor for the Junior Miss program (that's another story). After checking the shoes, I walked by the young girl's dress section and spotted a beautiful peach lace dress. Upon further examination I discovered that it was a size 14. I knew it was too big but I also knew that it had lots of expensive lace and material that I could use to construct a smaller dress for SaraKay. I couldn't resist and arrived home with the dress in hand.

Later on that day I began unpicking it and by Saturday night, SaraKay had a new, lacy Easter dress. I even had enough fabric left over to make a lace tie to go in her hair. When she got dressed up this morning and showed Daddy, I couldn't help commenting, "and all for only \$6.00!" Daddy added, "and 3 days of hard labor!" It had been quite a job but it was fun to see it come together.

(Monday night) By now some of you have heard that Tim received word today that he and Ryan Jenks qualified to go to the National 2-Ball Competition next weekend! They will not know exactly where until the final games are played but it could be in Salt Lake, Seattle, Charlotte, No. Carolina, Texas, or Indiana. We are supposed to receive word in the mail in the next few days. Tim's really pumped about it all and can hardly believe his good fortune. He has a busy week ahead of him with Crawford Cup and student body campaigning this week and part of next.

Last Wednesday I attended a campaign meeting for Stanley Williams who is running for Mike Simpson's spot in the state legislature. It was very interesting to see the master plan for the campaign and to toss around some ideas of people and places that might be of assistance in helping the cause.

Let me tell you about our trip to New Orleans. It was so enjoyable to travel with the other members of the board and their wives. We flew from Idaho Falls, leaving there at 7 a.m. and

having a short layover in Salt Lake before flying direct to New Orleans. I am always in awe of the marvels of flying and I know that literally hundreds of flights are successfully completed every day of the year, but I still can't quite dismiss the fear of being up so high and the possibility of mechanical error. Despite these reservations, I did enjoy the flight and took advantage of the time to read Dad's book about Louis and Clark.

When we got off the plane in New Orleans, the temperatures were in the 70's and for most of our stay it was pleasant and sunny. We arrived a day early for the conference and spent Thursday night and most of Friday sightseeing. It was intriguing to learn of the history and origins of the area. The bus tour was especially instructional. Our tour guide had minored in Louisiana history in college and his monologue while we traveled to and from the plantation was full of interesting stories.

Previous to leaving on our trip, I received several brochures advertising the different tours and we preregistered for a river boat dinner cruise. Upon arrival we spent one evening walking through the French Quarter, several parks, and along the waterfront.

Friday afternoon we took a bus tour which included seeing part of the city, several cemeteries, the oil fields and refineries along the Mississippi, and a plantation including touring a beautiful mansion. The New Orleans area had originally been settled by people seeking wealth. Whereas other areas had been colonized for religious freedom, the Louisiana area was seen as one that had amazing potential for money-making.

Several groups assisted in the settling of the area. The French were predominant and long after it became annexed to the U.S., the French clung to their language and culture, at one time even suggesting that it be a separate country from the colonies. The Irish came by the thousands to help in the building of dikes and the development of the land. Yellow fever took its toll and thousands of the new immigrants died before it was discovered how the disease was spread.

Another group that played a major role in the establishment of the new area was the African slaves. Slaves brought to New Orleans were

treated differently than those that lived in the southern states prior to the Civil War. They had certain rights including not working on Sunday. If a child was born to a slave woman and fathered by a plantation owner, the child was entitled to be raised as a member of the white family and had the same privileges as other children in the family including an inheritance. The slaves were taught to read and write and they learned a trade which enabled them to become valuable members of the community. When the civil war was fought, many of the slaves were forced to fight although many of them were very comfortable with their condition in Louisiana and felt that the slave question was not a problem in their area. The "Americans" from the U.S. that traveled to Louisiana were surprised at the rights afforded the slaves and at how well they were treated. Much of New Orleans' involvement in the war came as a result of the slave ships using the Mississippi to transport slaves when many of the southern states' seaports were ordered closed to slave traffic.

New Orleans is 100 miles inland and built on ground that is below sea level and had to be drained by digging ditches and canals and then kept dry by constructing huge dikes to keep the Mississippi from flooding it again. The soil is rich and black and the climate mild. It was interesting to see houses on one side of the dikes lower than the water level on the other side.

The river is 250-300 ft. deep and allows for enormous ocean-going vessels to come up the river shipping everything from wheat to petroleum. The ships were absolutely immense and lined the docks. Less than 100 yards away were the busy streets and businesses of New Orleans! What a treasure the river proved to be to a nation that had few really good means of travel.

I couldn't help comparing the history of the area and its development with the drama that was taking place during that same time in the colonies and then in the restoration of the gospel. Especially significant to me was the settler's reasons for establishing their communities and the long-range effect their motives have had on succeeding generations. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about this important part of our country and to understand the people and their backgrounds.

[Dad] It's hard to believe, but we are enjoying a beautiful snowfall with big lazy flakes floating down heavy enough to almost obscure the church. Last Saturday was such a beautiful spring day that we were able to get the lawn mowers started and get our lawn mowed for the first time this season and finish pruning the apple trees and the bushes along the ditch. Things really look good!

Chet and Becky went to Utah over the long Easter weekend and came back with a bunch of starts for their yard. They were excited to get a lawn mower last week and then to get some trees and ground cover started. There aren't many things quite as exciting as caring for your own place and taking pride in how it looks.

Last night we took Tim and Chris Murdock to Sam's Club to get the candy they wanted for their campaigns next week. We also took them to the mall where Tim was able to trade Doc Martens and get a stocking cap that he had been wanting. With a stop at McDonalds, it was an unusual home evening for us, but necessary.

I have been able to get through the winter without a cold or getting the flu. But last night I started coughing and have a runny nose this morning. The last throes of winter are tossing a cold my way and I didn't duck soon enough.

We received a copy of Mike's travel plans from Murdock Travel last week. He leaves Chihuahua on Monday, May 25 at 6:00 a.m., flies to El Paso, flies to Dallas/Ft Worth on American Flight 376 arriving at 1:27 p.m. with a couple hour layover until 3:50 p.m. Then he flies to SLC on American Flight 2061 arriving at 5:39 with a one-hour layover until 6:35 when he flies out on Delta 5768 to Idaho Falls and arrives here at 7:35pm. I share these details just in case anyone along the route would like to try to see him for a quick visit, such as anyone near Dallas or Salt Lake. We are excited about getting Mike home, in fact I am looking forward to writing the last donation to the ward missionary fund for him this week.

Paul has been transferred, but not very far, and is enjoying his new area and companion. We are grateful for missionaries who are used to working, getting by on what they have, getting up in the morning, and committed to serving the Lord and their fellow men.

So grateful for our Savior and his death and resurrection and the implications those events have for us. I am thankful for Easter to turn our thoughts to Him and remember His sacrifice, power, and atonement.

April 20, 1998

[Dad] We had a Larsen Family Night at Rick's in Pocatello last night. We had a delightful time just catching up on what everyone is doing, playing Scripture Charades, and playing "Name that Tune" from listening to a few chords on a CD. Mindy was the quickest in picking out the tunes and Roger was really swift on the charades. Their twins are really growing and while Sue was holding Connor I think he thought I was his Grandpa the way he kept looking and smiling and trying to talk to me.

Sunday was another full day with teaching two lessons, choir practice, Family History class, Home Teachers, and a short nap. It is sometimes a challenge to feel adequately prepared to teach both Sunday School and High Priest Group. They are such different lesson materials that not much of one can carry over to the other. The nap was welcome but I felt guilty because Sue was helping make campaign posters for Tim while I slept.

Yes, it is campaign time and Tim is getting into it in a big way. Justin Cook helped him put together a home page on the internet complete with pictures, sample ballot, and sound from Tim's campaign video, "Timtanic". That is another whole story in itself. He has really taken a lot of initiative in coming up with ideas and putting together the logistics for his campaign. I'm sure he will do well, but he has a good attitude about the whole thing and will be able to handle it well if he doesn't win.

Saturday was the annual Council Recognition Night. I was responsible for a VIP Reception immediately prior to the event and Sue was a crucial part of helping that to happen. We served over 120 people in less than half an hour. It worked out much better this year because of having it in the library and having more room for people to spread out, sit and visit. We also had three "watering holes" where they could get their drink, sweet roll, and frozen fruit cup. Sue and a couple of other Scouter wives did yeoman service (also with SaraKay's help) keeping refreshments topped up.

One of the honorees that night was Mark Ricks from Rexburg. He and his wife were wondering what was happening with my Dad. They were pleasantly surprised to learn about the mission.

Most of you have already heard about the major events of last week regarding Tim, his winning of Crawford Cup and the news that he and his partner get to go to Nationals in the NBA 2-Ball shoot off. We found out yesterday that we are going to Indiana this weekend for Tim to compete at halftime of a Pacers/Cavs game. Tomorrow night is my Orchestra concert, Thursday is BYU Graduation for Laurel, and Friday-Sunday is Indiana time with Tim.

[Mom] Yesterday morning after Tim left (toting campaign posters, bags of candy, fliers, and sundry other items) I sat down and breathed a sigh of relief. Last week was such a marathon by the time he prepared a video, gathered materials, organized his home page, sponsored a booth at the Friday night dance, and tried to find time in between all this to attend classes and keep up with school.

He has had some great ideas for his campaign and he and his friends have worked hard to see them become reality. He is running against a strong candidate and he's not sure he will win it. Last night he called his campaign manager, Lance Hansen, and Lance read his nominating speech to him over the phone. I could hear Tim thanking him and when the call was completed, he related to us some of the nice things Lance had said about him. Tim has always had the utmost respect for Lance and he was surprised but pleased at the compliments he was paid.

On Wednesday I spent the afternoon giving my "Be The Best You Can Be" speech to the girls and their mothers at the middle School. Each year the school sponsors a day when the parents join their students and they have a special program dealing with sensitive subjects as well as self-esteem and drug abuse.

After it was over and I was leaving the school I saw Ed Jackson and he commented that they had had a wonderful afternoon with the boys and to tell Tim thanks for his comments. Tim had been asked to be one of four high school boys on a panel dealing with drugs, peer pressure, and girls. When I got home, I questioned Tim about it and he said it had been a really good experience. I thought it was a

compliment to him that he was asked to participate.

Daddy mentioned Crawford Cup and Tim taking first place in the male vocal division. It was really exciting and we appreciated Becky and Chet joining us to share in the victory. It was such a fun night because most of Tim's peers have never heard him sing a solo and they were all pretty amazed!

We have decided to change Mike's report to June 14th for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that Tim wouldn't be able to participate on the 31st and Steve and Bonnie would be caught between two major family events-Kimball's farewell and Mike's homecomings, both on the same day.

We are getting so excited to have Mike home! I am including a short e-mail that I received from the mission "mom" regarding our Mighty Mike, the Marvelous Mexican Missionary!"

Paul's letter was touching. I tried to imagine him caring for the drunken friend and cleaning him up and cutting his hair. Some of you may not know that Paul was the head barber in his apartment at Ricks and even when he moved home for the summer, some of his former roommates still came over to get a haircut they liked his cuts so much.

His experience reminded me of a time "long ago and far away" when we had a similar experience with a very fine Mexican friend, Romalo. He was an illegal alien and was working for Zane Hansen as a farm laborer. We taught him the gospel and he was baptized.

One day he was driving along a gravel road and failed to stop at a stop sign and pulled into a milk truck. His car went under the bed of the truck and the bed sheared off the top of his car. He was badly hurt but managed to survive the crash. He was transported to the hospital and lay in a hospital bed for several days.

When he was coherent enough to realize what had happened and where he was, he also realized that he would be deported once he was well enough to travel. Knowing what a setback this would be, he quietly dressed and slipped out of the hospital one night.

Several days thereafter he arrived at our doorstep, tired, dirty, with blood soaked and matted hair. It was frightening to see the extent

of his wounds. I helped him wash his hair and we poured an antiseptic on his wounds. He sat on a chair in the kitchen area as I cut his long curly hair and tried to give him a cut that would enable him to keep his wounds clean.

Following this he slept for several hours and after a phone call, his friends arrived to take him to the Hansen's where he stayed until he was strong enough to work again.

When fall arrived and he was ready to return to Mexico, he arrived again at our doorstep. He thanked us profusely for our many kindnesses and then handed me the keys to his car. He said he didn't have much to offer but he wanted us to sell the car, keeping the money for ourselves as a gift from him.

Following this sweet conversation, he gave me a big hug and was gone. Several weeks later, our neighbors, the Reids, bought the car and I was able to send Romalo the proceeds. His appreciation had more than paid us back for our help in his time of need. It was truly a spiritual experience to be able to give service to him and I'm sure that Paul felt much the same as he ministered to his Salvadorian friend.

Tim's notification of his upcoming competition in the National 2-Ball Finals was an exciting moment. He has been so pumped about the competition and can't believe they really get to go representing all the Western Conference. If all goes as planned, we will leave at 11 :30 Thursday morning after Fed-Ex delivers the plane tickets to our door. Dad will take him with him to Utah and leave Tim's here for him to catch the plane with Bob and Ryan Jenks on Friday morning out of Idaho Falls.

Daddy will pack his clothes with Tim's and take only a carry-on in case we are pressed for time when I deliver him to the airport. Daddy and I will go to Provo for Laurel's graduation on Thursday afternoon, take pictures, go to dinner, and visit late into the night with John and Laurel (my favorite part). Friday morning, we will attend Laurel's convocation at 8:00 a.m. and then make a speedy trip to the airport, for Daddy to catch the plane to Indianapolis.

I will drive home and Daddy and Tim and the Jenks will spend three days in Indianapolis with the competition. Included in their weekend will be a reception, dinners, practices, and the competition at half time during the Pacers game

at noon (11a.m. Mountain Time) on Saturday. They hope to get in some sight-seeing and other fun Saturday night following the awards dinner.

When Tim got home from school yesterday, he said that he received a call from Channel 3 and they were coming to the school Wednesday morning to do some filming and run a feature story on him and Ryan and their competition. When he told me the other night that he didn't think he was going to win his election, I responded with a common but true cliché, "You can't win them all." He has certainly had some nice successes lately.

Not to be outdone, SaraKay and I are planning a nice weekend complete with a sleep over, music festival, and then a trip to McDonalds. She will be relieved to have the festival over and be able to focus on some different songs. Tim will be her escort to the recital Thursday evening in our absence. On Sunday we have stake conference. I feel badly that Daddy and Tim will miss it but I know this experience together will be a special one for them both.

Ever since Becky babysat for me while we were in New Orleans, I have wanted to find a way to repay her and last Friday night Daddy and I helped her and Chet paint their nursery. Becky purchased a cute border and after we painted the room and sponge painted a section, we put up the border. It looked so cute! We didn't get there until after seven and it was nearly 11 when we finished and headed home but it had been such a fun evening with lots of visiting as we worked together.

It has been a joy to have Becky and Chet close and it always makes me homesick for the rest of you when we spend time with them because I realize how fun it would be if you lived closer. But, I want each of you to feel good about where you are living and your influence for good.

Tim has appreciated your encouragement and excitement as he has shared his successes. Congratulations to Laurel as she graduates this week! Another milestone reached! Love, Mom

Dear Larsen family,
This is Sister Cluff. We love your son dearly and think he is one of the BEST missionaries ever. He is so diligent and carries such a special spirit with him. Thanks for all your preparation and sacrifices so he could come here and do so

much good. We hope to meet you some day.
Love, Sister Mona Cluff

April 28, 1998

[Mom] The last few weeks have been hectic but very exciting and rewarding. Hopefully now we can have the pace slow down a little to give us time to address the less glamorous yet necessary tasks of spring cleaning, yard work, the mowing business, finding summer employment, and other details of keeping on top of home and family.

Monday Tim left for school loaded with the paraphernalia of his campaign. He and his friend, Chris Murdock, had spent a lot of time producing campaign videos that were to be shown to the student body on Tuesday along with a nominating speech by their campaign manager and a response from the candidate.

Tim's perception of how things were going was increasingly pessimistic as the campaign progressed and I had pretty much dismissed a victory. When he returned from school Tuesday he was pumped and pleased with how his video was received and how well Lance Hansen had done at the nominating assembly.

Tim's video was called the "Timtanic." He had filmed it in a rowboat at the gravel pits. He mimicked several scenes from the movie including the scene when Jack first met Rose (complete with Wig, a period hat, and shawl over a full-body wet suit) who was contemplating jumping overboard, the spitting scene, and finally the scene when the Titanic was sinking and Jack and Rose were hanging on for dear life. The final scene was Tim, floating in the water, feigning semi-unconsciousness and hypothermia asks, "Rose, promise me that you will vote for Tim Larsen for V.P."

When she replies, "Tim for V.P! No way!" Tim amazingly gathers strength and leaps up, throwing Rose from her raft and causing her demise.

Use your imagination to visualize all of this heavy drama taking place in a rowboat in the Moreland gravel pits at dusk and you will have a pretty good idea of just how ridiculous it was. But the kids at the high school thought it was a hoot and I think it swayed a lot of voters and helped him eventually win the election.

Tim had such a difficult time deciding whether to run at all that I thought he might drag his feet with the campaign, but he was pretty creative and organized things on his own with very little help from me except in the making of posters. I thought it was a credit to him that friends and supporters gathered around and he always had plenty of help with the projects of the election. His trip to Indiana prevented him from attending the dance where the results were announced, but by the time he left on Friday, he was tired of it all and relieved to be on his way to Indianapolis.

Daddy and I left about noon on Thursday to go to Provo for Laurel's graduation. Our departure time was originally planned for 10:30 but several circumstances complicated the morning for us. We were supposed to have gotten an itinerary on Wednesday, insurance waivers, and other instructions from the NBA via FedEx. When nothing arrived by that afternoon, Janet Jenks called our contact person with the NBA and they informed her that mistakes had been made and all the materials would arrive Thursday morning. Included in the packet would be the plane tickets and we knew that we couldn't leave home without retrieving Daddy's ticket since he was flying out of Salt Lake Friday morning and Tim, Ryan and Bob Jenks were flying out of Idaho Falls on Friday and meeting Dad at the Salt Lake airport.

When the packet arrived on Thursday morning, Daddy checked the tickets and discovered that he wasn't on the same flight as the rest of them. He immediately phoned the travel agency and they began trying to rectify that. Several of the waivers had to be FedEx'd back that day and the wrong tickets had to be returned before the NBA would give us new ones. We frantically got things sorted through including the list of things to bring in a carry-on in case luggage got lost en route. By the time we pulled out of Blackfoot at 12:15, we felt like we had been through the wringer!

We had hoped for a leisurely trip and a visit with John and Laurel prior to commencement, but we phoned them and told them to meet us at the Marriott Center and save us a seat. Thankfully the time after commencement was more relaxed and we had wonderful visits, took some pictures of the happy graduate and proud husband, and enjoyed the event.

The graduation program was a mixed bag. One of the candidates for an honorary doctorate degree spoke and used a lot of sarcasm. He poked fun at President Clinton and other past presidents, the media, lawyers, and other professions. I knew he was making a statement about our nation and the depths we have sunk to but it was still difficult to hear it spoken from the podium at an LDS institution.

The worst moments for me were when he used terrible profanity and didn't seem to blink an eye regarding using that type of language at a church school. It seemed in such poor taste. Laurel was noticeably upset by it and we spent time later talking it through and trying to decide just how the university deals with being in the academic community but not "of it." I'm sure it was an uncomfortable time for President Monson who was seated directly behind the speaker and presiding at the meeting.

Friday morning we had set the alarm for 6:30 in order to give us time to get to the airport by 8:00. When I awoke about 6:15 Daddy was already up and getting ready. He said that he had gotten up about 5:30 to use the bathroom and had been so excited about the upcoming trip that he had been unable to go back to sleep. It wasn't until then that I realized how thrilled he was to be going with Tim to Indianapolis and attending all the fun activities that were planned for them.

We arrived at the airport in time to take pictures as Tim, Ryan and Bob came through the tunnel and I left shortly thereafter, bidding the foursome good-bye. I drove back into Salt Lake and spent the morning with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. We had a wonderful visit, catching up on life and all that is happening with my siblings and their families.

It was nice to have Grandpa Arch able to visit with us. His new medication has worked wonders in helping him get his memory back and being able to understand what is going on. I felt like saying, "Welcome back, Daddy!"

Following this visit, Grandma Ilene and I got on her computer and reviewed some of the work I have been doing for Temple Ready. Somehow, I sensed that there were more records to have work done for them than my genealogy specialist and I had found and so I went over the material with mother and she showed me how

to approximate and submit more than the computer program will pull out automatically.

I was amazed at Grandma Ilene's ability to work the computer program. She was moving so quickly that I could hardly follow what she was doing. After nearly three hours of pouring over records, I told her I thought Daddy was getting hungry for lunch and I convinced her to take a break. (Aren't I tricky) Thank goodness! What a mental workout! Later I mentioned to Grandpa that I could hardly keep up with Grandma's pace and he agreed. He said that she had moved ahead with the records in her possession and prepared the work for literally hundreds of individuals whose work needed doing. I'm sure that both Grandma Gooch and Grandma Richards are pleased that much of their research has finally born fruit and that the work is getting done.

I went to bed last night with so many concerns that I lay awake until almost midnight worrying about all the things I need to get done in the next few days. Mostly it is Young Women business which never seems to be completed, but our commitments on the campaign for Stan Williams and the help I am giving Mary Taylor on Jr. Miss are also a big part of my worries right now and I'm feeling the pressures mount.

One fun thing about Tim and Ryan's weekend and their win was that they have been highlighted on the sports section of the TV nightly news on all three channels. Yesterday Daddy went to Jenks' and Channel 8 shot a segment featuring the boys shooting and talking about their experiences in the Market Street Arena. They even showed some actual footage of the Indianapolis competition.

At the airport on Sunday night, Channel Six filmed their arrival and the welcoming reception we had arranged. Because it was a Sunday, I didn't feel right about making too much of a fuss, but Tim's priest advisor, Randy Cox, got permission from the Bishop to have both the Teacher and Priest Quorums be at the airport to welcome them home along with the adult leaders and the Bishop himself.

Our neighborhood boys also joined the crowd and when they arrived, they were greeted with banners, friends cheering, and a TV cameraman. Chet had phoned all three TV stations after we found out on Saturday that

they had won and all three stations featured them in their sports part of the news. Needless to say, we have had some pretty exciting moments the last few days.

When Tim called Saturday about 4 to report their win, I answered the phone. He said, "Hi, Mom." I asked him, "How did you get along?" There was a long pause and then he said, "Well, two white Mormon boys from Blackfoot, Idaho are the National 2-Ball Champions!" Later I said, "Were you hot?" "No, he replied, "But we weren't as cold as they were!"

Apparently, the other team that represented the Eastern Conference were both Afro-Americans and one even had dread locks. Tim said they were both nice boys and it was fun to get acquainted with them and the other contestants. It was certainly a wonderful trip for father and son and will be a life-long memorable experience for them both.

This weekend Tim will be competing in Boise in the State Solo Contest and then his year will begin to unwind. We've been so grateful to each of you for your show of interest and excitement as he has gone through these last few weeks. It never ceases to amaze me at how much he loves each of you and wants you to share in his life. He has lots of friends but none means as much to him as you siblings. Thanks for supporting him in the good times and the bad and for pulling away from the many stresses of your busy lives to wish him well.

SaraKay spent Saturday morning at music festival and then we celebrated by going to McDonalds. Later we wandered around Wal-Mart and then came home to await Tim's call.

Last Sunday B.J. Driscoll reported his mission (six months early) and his brother had his farewell. B.J. arrived home from Brazil and has been undergoing radiation and chemo treatment for Hodgkin disease for the last two weeks and he has lost all his hair. I wasn't able to attend the meeting but I guess he bore a beautiful testimony of having faith in the midst of trial and trusting in the Lord. He said that he didn't know if he had been appointed to live or die but that having served an honorable mission, he felt that he was ready for whatever should be the Lord's will.

I kept thinking of his sweet parents and the trial this is to all the family. What a shock and

unexpected turn of events in the life of an outstanding young man who never dreamed this would be happening just a few months ago. Isn't life unbelievable. What is there to do but live each day with gratitude, remain faithful, and carry on. We love you! Mom

[Mom] It feels good to be through with April and into May. I think I mentioned in a previous family letter that during the state school board convention in Sun Valley I attended a health fair. As a part of the fair I got a flu shot and had my blood pressure taken. I should have mentioned to the nurse who took my blood pressure that I had just gotten a shot as that may have influenced my blood pressure reading, but having never had a problem with it, I didn't say anything. When the nurse took the reading, she asked me if I was on medication for high blood pressure and I said, "No." She was surprised and said that my reading was extremely high and I was a prime candidate for a stroke unless I got some medical attention. She advised me to get to a doctor the minute I got home from the convention. Her comments alarmed me and I went in for another reading as soon as I got home.

When my new reading showed everything was okay, I questioned the nurse as to why it was so high the day before. She said that there is a lot of stress associated with being in new situation and that perhaps my body was responding to that. The fact that I had previously just had a shot may have also elevated it. Although the later check confirmed that everything was okay, the experience was a wake-up call for me. I realized that everything I do has an impact on my health and that I need to be mindful of this and not take on more stress than I can manage.

About three weeks ago, at the request of the Jr. Miss committee, I agreed to be an advisor to one of the contestants, Mary Taylor. As most of you are aware, her mother passed away about 2 years ago. Mary is one of the Laurels in our ward YW group and the committee thought it would be very natural for me to assist her in her preparations for the program.

By the time Saturday night arrived, I was worn out from all the last-minute details and rehearsals. It was quite a challenge for me to balance her need for help with her desire to do things her way. I tried hard to respect her individuality and yet suggest and help with

things that needed attention. It was such a disappointment when she didn't win any awards Saturday night at the performance after so much work and effort.

Another event last week was our commitment to help with Stan William's campaign. Daddy and I agreed to put up signs, locate places for those signs and get permission, call people in regards to having their names on a newspaper ad, and send out mailers. All of this needed to be completed by last Friday.

Daddy's trip to Indiana the previous weekend left him running behind on his commitments in his job and so he was pressured to put in some long hours to catch up.

By Friday afternoon nearly everything was completed and he and Farrell Wray were able to spend part of the evening putting out the signs. Stan has been very appreciative of our help and we were grateful that we were able to follow through on our assignments.

Another commitment we made several months ago was in regard to the genealogy class taught by Paula Baxter. It required attendance at a Sunday class, but we also had assignments to complete and a two-hour a week commitment on the computer with Paula helping us.

As the month progressed it became difficult to find a two-hour block to fulfill that assignment. Added to this was the stress Daddy was feeling from being in the ward's melodrama. The whole reason for a drama night was to help activate our neighbor, Ron Mangum. The bishop thought it would help draw him in if he directed a play for the ward.

When Ron called and asked Daddy to play the villain, he didn't know how in the world he would find time, but he agreed anyway. He has been having rehearsals for the play in between everything else and he is looking forward to having that finished up and over before Wood Badge starts demanding more of his attention. Two weeks ago we got a bid for a cement pad for our patio. We have been saving up to have this done and finally felt like we could move ahead with the project. Thursday night when I got home from the luncheon, I could see the lights on in back of the house and I went around to find Daddy and Tim shoveling out the gravel that has covered the patio area, pulling up the black plastic, and trying to level off the ground in

preparation for the concrete that was to be delivered the next day.

Daddy continued working until after ten trying to get things ready and finally came in and went to bed. Saturday he was up early again and working on some yard projects that we've been chipping away at. It has been hard to find time to take care of the yard.

Friday afternoon Tim left for Boise and the state solo competition. The school paid for their trip, hotel room, and registration for the event. Tim competed with kids from all over Idaho including all A-1 to A-4 schools and came in third. We were really proud of him and just wished we could have been there to see it.

It was a difficult weekend to be gone since Friday night was a church youth dance and Saturday he missed the Continuous Scripture Reading Fireside and the Junior Miss Program, all events he wanted to attend. He has so many places to go and things to do these next few weeks! He only has 11 days of school left.

He is being honored tomorrow night at the Jazz game so Daddy and I are going with him to the game tomorrow night and driving back in the wee hours of the morning on Wednesday. One last hurrah!

When we sat down last night to schedule this week, I commented that I am going to "lie low" and not take on any more commitments for May. We are excited for the chance to have John and Laurel and Becky and Chet here for Mother's Day and then to go to Iowa to see our new granddaughter and celebrate with Shauntel and Randy.

Tim leaves on Chamber's Tour next week, has an Honor Society trip the next, and will leave for Boy's State on May 31st. Bonnie and the children are going to spend a couple days with us the last week in May. I have been looking forward to these fun events. Hopefully we can "JUST SAY NO" for the next few weeks to other commitments.

May 3, 1998

[Dad] If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it was, and always will be yours. If it never returns, it was never yours to begin with. If it just sits in your living room, messes up your stuff, eats your food, uses your telephone, takes your money, and never behaves as if you

actually set it free in the first place, you either married it or gave birth to it!

Well, after that bit of inane humor, I guess I am ready to get serious about my family letter. Last week I was involved with Lynn Baldwin from the U.S. Bank Trust Department in putting on a series of estate planning seminars entitled, "Wealth accumulation and preservation." We did an excellent job in preparing, inviting, and advertising but didn't have very many people show up. It was an interesting learning experience.

Last Friday, Perry Cochell was here from the Regional office and we were presenters at another seminar in Idaho Falls sponsored by Eastern Idaho Technical College. There was a much bigger crowd there because admission was charged rather than being free. Our information about estate planning and the use of charitable trusts to transfer wealth was very well received. I had spent quite a bit of time in putting together the booklet and handouts that went with Perry's presentation and they turned out very professional looking.

I have really enjoyed my work with the Boy Scouts and have felt that many of my peers in the professional community recognize us as one of the few viable options when it comes to charities that are organized and knowledgeable and able to handle any kind of gift that might be contemplated.

All of the attention Tim has received for his accomplishments has been interesting. I am proud of the way he has handled it and hasn't let it go to his head. His depth of talent in winning a national title one weekend with a basketball and then taking 3rd at state in competition with male vocalists from all over the state, is really commendable. And then to have him worthily assisting at the Sacrament table today, being a friend to the neighbor boys, being a buddy for SaraKay, going to ward choir practice, fills me with pride at the stalwart young man he is.

Having a large family brings with it a lot of responsibility and trials. But it also multiplies the joys and rewards I feel as a parent. The closeness you each feel towards each other and the regular and often inspired contacts and calls you make to each other are always touching when we hear about them. This is what forever

families are all about-each one moving ahead, accomplishing and growing in their own sphere but maintaining contact, supporting, encouraging, and loving each other.

May 11, 1998

[Mom] Grandpa and Grandma Larsen seem to be doing fine and enjoying their assignments in the mission office. The nature of Grandpa's work has changed and he has been training for his new responsibilities these last few weeks. He will be taking care of the mission finances instead of the vehicles and will be working in the same office as Alva Lu. It was fun to visit with Alva Lu on Mother's Day. She said that they get a little lonely for family on holidays but for the most part, they are really busy and involved and the time is passing quickly.

Grandma and Grandpa Richards spent Mother's Day with Kathy and Dick. They had an appointment today with a neurologist to talk over Grandpa's medications. Grandma is feeling more at ease all the time with Salt Lake traffic and able to get them where they need to go. It's just been a little over a year ago that they moved to Salt Lake from Richland.

Steph and Linds have been landscaping their place including pouring a cement patio in the back, moving a fence, laying sod, and planting fruit trees. They have put a lot of time and energy into it these past months and I'm sure they are really going to enjoy it. Their home is the last one in a cul-de-sac and they have a very large, paved area directly in front of their house that has so little traffic that the kids use the area for biking, playing basketball, and roller blading. It's like having their own private playground.

Shauntel and Randy are hosting both sets of parents this weekend for Randy's graduation. We arrive in Des Moines at 4 p.m. Thursday and Randy will be there to taxi us to Coralville. Friday is graduation and Saturday we are touring Nauvoo. Sunday our plane leaves about three in the afternoon.

We are looking forward to getting acquainted with Camille, taking lots of pictures, and sharing this memorable time with them. Randy finished up classes last week and it has taken some of the pressure off of Shauntel to have him home with Camille during the days. She finishes her contract with the district the end of May.

Jeff and Jonie are in the throes of finishing the paperwork for a new home. They have selected a lovely manufactured home that will be moved onto some property they purchased several months ago. As is usually the case, it has all taken longer than they thought it would, but they are hoping to be moved in by the end of May. Alex continues to grow leaps and bounds.

Steve and Bonnie arrived back in Tooele last Saturday after their stint in North Carolina. They had a long eight-hour trip home on Saturday but on one flight there were several empty seats in the back of the plane and the kids were able to have room to sleep and roam around. It was such a relief to arrive home and find all well there. Steve will be working for a week in Salt Lake and then gone for another week to finish up his commitment in North Carolina.

David and Andrea are planning a short trip over the Memorial Day weekend with some friends to Missouri. On Monday, May 25th, Mike's flight has a four-hour layover in Dallas and they are planning to get in some good visiting time with him then. Dave's work has gone to a 10-hour day, four-day work week and so he will have three-day weekends from now on. He says it has already been really nice and they are enjoying the change and always able to find plenty to do to fill the time. Andrea's health has been good and everything seems to be going fine with her pregnancy.

Becky and Chet were here for Mother's Day. Chet has been given increased responsibility with his work and enjoying it, but he is in the process of trying to decide which graduate school to attend and is beginning preparations for returning to school in a year. Becky will complete her contract the end of May and is excited for that. They have been doing some painting and decorating and are even growing a garden. They have really spruced up their yard.

John and Laurel arrived Friday and we had a wonderful time visiting with them. It was fun for me to sit in on all the chat about babies and pregnancies Friday night when Becky and Chet came to visit. We had a good laugh over their experiences at adjusting to this new time of life. They are looking forward to their visit with Steph and Linds over the Memorial Day holiday. John is taking some summer classes and Laurel continues her work at the MTC.

Mike called for Mother's Day and we discussed his upcoming release. I could sense his apprehension at all the decisions to be made in the next few months and all the things that will need attention once he returns. He is excited about the possibility of seeing Dave and Andrea in Dallas, John and Laurel in Salt Lake, and Bonnie and children in Idaho Falls with the rest of us when he arrives Monday night.

Paul's call was a little more difficult to get. When he called Saturday morning to schedule a time Sunday to call, he mentioned that he had not received any letters for about six weeks. I was really alarmed at this news and couldn't quit thinking about him for the balance of the day. I know how important letters are to new missionaries and the thought of him waiting week after week for any news from home made me so sad. When we called him on Sunday, he sounded good and reassured us that probably he would have a big bundle of mail arrive Monday.

Monday, I tried to call the mission home to visit with someone about the situation, but the number on the mission envelope was incorrect and I couldn't seem to find an operator who knew the listing. Today I am going to try to get an E-mail address for the mission and transmit something that way. Hopefully we can get some answers on just what is going on. There is another Elder Larsen in the mission and Paul thinks maybe his mail is being routed to the other missionary. Aside from that, he seemed very happy and pleased with his mission. He has enjoyed good health and had some good companions so he feels very fortunate.

Tim attended the Prom last Saturday with Corinne Simmons. They went scuba diving Saturday afternoon and then came home for a few hours before leaving for dinner and the dance. He really looked spiffy in his tuxedo and we got some good pictures of the group he was with. This week he is on tour with the Chamber Singers and won't be back until Thursday night.

For the last few weeks, he has been moving pipe at the stake center, mowing lawn at the cemetery as well as for several private individuals, and it has really kept him busy trying to keep up with it all between rain storms and school activities. He applied at Basic American and needs to complete the forms and get them submitted this week. He is hoping to be able to

start immediately after Boy's State and work the entire summer. I picked up an app for Mike.

Sara Kay has been rather apprehensive about Daddy and I leaving Thursday although she has lots of friends who have offered to help take care of her until Tim gets home from tour. She was fussing about it this morning before leaving on the bus and was a little teary. She is really enjoying school and is doing well with both her violin and piano although it is quite a challenge to get them both practiced each day. She is such a source of joy to us!

I appreciated all of you touching base with me this past week for Mother's Day. I recognize how special each of you are and know you are a great blessing to me. I am grateful for the lives you lead and the goodness I see in you. Last night when I went to bed, I lay for a little while mulling over the upcoming week and the preparations I needed to make to be ready. Daddy had been really tired and had gone to bed a little before I did. By the time I climbed in, he was barely awake and in a matter of seconds, he was a million miles away in a deep sleep.

I laid there for a while listening to him sleep and thinking how grateful I was for him and the way he takes care of me. Some days when things have been unusually hectic or I've had a lot to deal with, he comes home and lifts the burden or listens to my concerns and helps me sort out my feelings. He is so thoughtful of me and rarely complains when I come up with some idea or feeling that we need to do; something for one of you kids, even though the idea usually involves his pocketbook. The older I get the more I lean on him and I hate to imagine what my life would be like without his daily love and concern.

[Dad] Things are a lot quieter around here right now because Tim left yesterday on Chamber's tour. It seemed strange to just have the three of us as we went to the Larsen family home evening in Pocatello last night. Roger and Mindy hosted us in the recreation center in the complex where they live. It was good to sit around and catch up on what is happening in each of their families. They were all interested in hearing all about Mike and Paul's missions and Tim's 2-Ball experiences. I am grateful that we have started having these get togethers.

Sunday was a good Mother's Day. It seemed like the phone kept ringing all day long, but I know it was rewarding for Mom to hear from each of you. It was fast Sunday for us because we had a missionary farewell for Josh Watson last week. There were some wonderful testimonies and we especially enjoyed having John and Laurel and Becky and Chet here.

The Jamboral on Friday and Saturday was a tremendous success with over 8,000 Scouts and leaders gathering at the fair grounds for a myriad of activities and displays. I had very little to do with it and enjoyed my minor role with a couple booths and plenty of time to mingle and visit with great Scouters. The goal of giving local Scouts an opportunity to experience a Jamboree atmosphere and the breadth of activities offered as well as the vantage point of seeing what Scouting represents beyond their own limited unit activities was met. It looks like we are probably going to repeat the experience in 2000 to welcome in the new millennium. My biggest job last week was working on the James E. West campaign. I developed letters and record keeping around the theme: "Give a boy a compass-the values of Scouting". With posters in each office and letters going out to over 500 people, organizing the follow-up phoning and contacts, it was a busy week.

May 18, 1998

[Mom] We arrived home last night about ten from our trip to Iowa. It was such a relief to get home safe and sound and to find all well here. Tim and SaraKay had worked hard to keep the house clean and the dishes done and Tim had even mowed and trimmed the lawn, a four-hour job when there's only one person working at it. We really appreciated his thoughtfulness.

Our stay with Shauntel and Randy was rewarding. Randy picked up both sets of parents about four on Thursday at the Des Moines airport and we enjoyed our visit with him en route to Coralville. When we arrived, we all made a beeline for the house and the new baby. We were all anxious to hold her and get better acquainted. She is a beautiful dark haired, blue-eyed little girl with a ready smile and cheerful disposition. The whole time we were there we hardly heard her cry. It was obvious that she was thriving on all the love and attention she had received from Shaunnie and Randy.

They fixed up a cute nursery with a bed, a dressing table, and dresser. Shauntel showed us all the wonderful gifts she had received from family members, co-workers, the ward young women, and other friends. People have been so generous with them. Randy was obviously comfortable caring for Camille and she was quick to respond to either parent.

That evening a good friend of Shauntel's, Cindy Kaeler, and her husband, Jim, invited us all to their new home for a barbeque. They recently moved into a lovely three-story home situated in a beautiful wooded area on the outskirts of Iowa City. Cindy is Shauntel's visiting teaching partner and also a realtor. She has been helping them investigate the possibility of buying a home this summer and has been very kind to them. Her husband is a nonmember and is a sweet congenial fellow and very supportive of Cindy's involvement in the Church.

We thoroughly enjoyed the evening, complete with a tour of the house, and a peaceful chat on their patio as we rocked Camille to sleep in their glider swing. Iowa is such a beautiful state—lots of green wooded areas bordering neatly kept homesteads and farms. The people are warm and gracious and we certainly felt at home with the friends we met who have been an important part of Shauntel and Randy's experience these last five years.

Friday we took a short excursion to see the radiology department of the hospital where Randy will receive his training and then we drove to the area where there are some homes similar to the one that they are thinking about buying. It is in a new subdivision on the outskirts of Iowa City and quite a distance from their apartment. The move would mean they would change wards and they expressed disappointment at that as they have formed a lot of sweet friendships over the years. But, the homes are lovely and it would be a real treat for them to have their own place and more space both in the home and yard area. For now, Shauntel is just trying to finish up her contract with the district while Randy helps with Camille at home. His residency begins July 1st and they have most of June to take a breather and address the house issue.

Friday night we were all invited to a reception for the graduates and then the ceremony. Just prior to our departure, a terrible rain storm started

and we worried that we would be drenched as we walked from the parking lot to the reception location. We decided that Daddy would drop Shauntel, Camille, and me off in front of the building and he would park the car and brave the storm.

Randy and his parents in the other car were trying to find a parking spot and so we were separated for a little while. As Shauntel and I entered the student union building, we heard a large siren and I asked Shauntel what it was. She said it meant a tornado watch was in effect. We both stood inside the door waiting for Daddy when a woman told us to get down to the basement and wait there until the watch was over.

When we got to the basement, it was standing room only as everyone in the entire building was down there awaiting word that the tornado was past. Several people were watching the weather on the TV as the tornado was charted by a local station.

Daddy and Randy and his group eventually found us and we all stood around for nearly a half hour awaiting permission to return to the reception. Finally, the danger was over and we went upstairs. That night on the news it showed the tornado and the damages, including a Wal-Mart store that had the roof ripped off. It was the worst tornado Iowa had experienced since 1963 and we were there!

Friday evening we attended the graduation ceremony. It was interesting to be on the campus and see the facilities and become acquainted with the university. We had Camille with us and Shauntel and I situated the infant seat between us on a seat in the balcony. Although we were quite a distance from the podium and stage, Randy was on the front row of the graduates and so we were able to see him throughout the program and it added a nice touch to the occasion for us.

I was impressed with the program and the good advice that was given the students as they embark on their professions as doctors. I kept thinking how amazing it is that all these young students would be in clinics throughout the world in the next five years (some shorter times than that) and that it was a heavy responsibility for a faculty to prepare them to be competent in their field.

At one point in the program I turned to check on Camille and I noticed that Shauntel's eyes were brimmed with tears. I remember Daddy's graduation and how I sat and fought back the tears as I reflected back on the long hours, lonely nights, and all the sacrifices that we had made. I'm sure most of you can identify with Shauntel's emotions as the diplomas were awarded and the four years came to a successful end.

Saturday we visited Nauvoo. Although we had been there before, there were a lot of things we hadn't seen and it was enjoyable to visit the sites and reflect on that time in history and the impact it has had on our lives.

Sunday Shauntel drove us to the airport and we said our good-byes. We so appreciated Randy and Shauntel making our stay a memorable one. We thoroughly enjoyed the chance to be with them, especially in light of the significant events that had transpired in their lives. We left Iowa feeling excited for them as they embark on this new stage of their lives with Randy as a resident, Shauntel as full-time homemaker, and little Camille in the family circle. En route home I finished the book I had been reading and so I had some time to think about our experiences of the past few days.

As the plane flew over Wyoming the sky was so clear that I could see the land below and pick out rivers, towns, and even vehicles on the highways. I found myself thinking about times when I would be out working in the garden on a beautiful summer day and look up and spot an airplane. Sometimes on those occasions I would feel a longing to escape the drudgery of my life and leave behind the pressures and worries that were a part of each day. I also thought about what a magnificent and beautiful place this earth is and how amazing it is that man can fly! In just three hours of actual flying time we had gone hundreds of miles and covered a distance that would normally take days!

[Dad] Yes, as Sue has so aptly described it, this past weekend was certainly a rewarding one. It was wonderful to see how good and loving Shaunnie and Randy are with Camille and sense the depth of their love for each other and the stability of their relationship because of what they have been through together. We are so happy for them to be having these successes

and recognition and to have their lives so in line with what Heavenly Father would want.

We really enjoyed going to Nauvoo again. It is such a beautiful spot and so quiet and peaceful. There weren't very many people there and we were nearly alone as we went through the Cultural Hall, the Bakery, went on a ride on a horse-drawn cart, visited the Brickery and got a Nauvoo brick for a souvenir. We marveled at the intricate work and design of the old quilts on display upstairs in the Cultural Hall. There is a lot of interesting history behind those quilts.

This week, the main events are calling to follow up on the James E. West solicitation letters, Tim's Chamber's Concert, and final rehearsals and production of the ward melodrama. I have enjoyed being in this play but it has come at a very busy and awkward time and has required more sacrifice and time than I was really ready to give it. It will be good to have it over, and I hope the ward enjoys it as much as the cast.

May 25, 1998

[Dad] Yes! Mike's home! It was a lump-in-the-throat, choke-back-the-tears time as we hugged him and welcomed him home last night. It seems so unreal to anticipate a missionary coming home and then the reality of it sinks in as they walk through the "All Arrivals" door of the airport and you watch and participate in the hugs. He looks good and sounds good—though with a bit of an accent. His luggage and shoes look like he wore them out in the service of the Lord.

As he speaks a little haltingly of some of his experiences, we receive afresh the witness that the Lord watches over His own. Looking at our home and community through his eyes we gain a greater appreciation for the bountiful blessings we enjoy and recognize how rich we are compared to so many others in this world. We are so blessed and rich in the things that really matter—the Gospel, worthy sons and daughters with choice companions, and beautiful grandchildren.

Last night we couldn't hardly quit talking with Mike even though we knew piano lessons, school and work were going to hit this morning and life must move on. Even after we finally broke away, Tim and Mike stayed up for quite a while longer.

Mike, because of his flight schedule and lay overs spent some time with Dave and Andrea and their family in Texas. He saw their home, ate with them, and then resumed his journey to Salt Lake City where he was met by John and Laurel and visited with them for an hour before his flight to Idaho Falls.

Besides us four "homies," Chet and Becky were there, Bonnie and Kimball, and Mike's friend Brandon Hawker and his brother and girlfriend. So, we had a pretty good group to greet him. Bonnie's mother, Jean, had made a couple of banners on the computer to welcome Mike. He has to report to the Stake President this morning at 7:30 for his release interview and he has a job interview on Thursday with Basic American.

Our thoughts and conversation turned to Paul several times during the night. So, Paul, we hope things have improved as far as getting letters through to you and that you can feel our love and support. I faxed the mission president about our concerns and he had one of the mission staff call us when he was unable to get through himself. They recommended using the pouch for a while. Someone had probably sent you or another missionary from Idaho some money and so the El Salvador post office employees were on the lookout for your letters and pulling them to look for money.

Last week was the dress rehearsal on Thursday and the final performance on Saturday of the "Double Take at Beatrice's Boarding House". I think the performances went well and people enjoyed seeing me as the truly villainous person I really am! I think some good fellowshiping was done and relationships built with the cast and support staff. I wish you all could have seen me in top hat, mustache, vest, string tie, cane, and all made up. It was hard to be "slimey" enough to be a good villain, but everyone said I did a good job.

Another special time last week was going to the Chambers concert on Friday night. That group is such a neat bunch of kids and we just love them all. For the first time this year their concert involved a lot of fun numbers with quite a bit of choreography and the kids really got into it and did a great job.

The next to the last number was Tim's solo of "Old Man River" and he did a masterful job.

Linnea Hammond helped him polish it and accompanied him and everyone was amazed with how good he sounded.

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's covering of the events of last night when we picked up Mike at the Idaho Falls airport. What a thrill! This morning when he returned from being released, he sat and talked to us for a while before Daddy had to leave for work. He hated to go because he knew that Mike was going to be talking all day about his mission.

After Dad left, Mike and I began going through his boxes from the storage room and started evaluating everything that needed to be done to get him situated for school in three months. I called the eye doctor and the dentist and the dentist had a cancellation and ask him to come right in so he is at the dentist right now having two years of tartar build-up removed. His eye appointment is scheduled for tomorrow and his interview at Basic American is Thursday morning. We have never had a missionary that came back at this time of the year and stayed to work before leaving for school and we are all looking forward to it.

Tim has especially been excited to have Mike home for the summer. I could hear them visiting after I went to bed last night and it seemed good to hear those late-night conversations going on again.

Bonnie and children came Thursday night and spent the weekend with us. It was a wonderful time for her to be here because we had both Tim's concert and Dad's melodrama and it was fun to have her support and rave reviews. SaraKay really loves mothering the kids and she was especially good with Christine. Bonnie left Sunday to spend some time at her home in Idaho Falls and will come back here for Thursday and Friday when Steve arrives from North Carolina.

Sunday morning Rachel was sick and so Bonnie stayed home from our meetings. We talked her into letting Nate come. He and Tim are great pals and we thought that between the bunch of us we could manage. We had a bag full of toys and Cheerios and got along fine until he spotted Tim at the sacrament table. Following the sacrament as Tim was coming back to sit with us, Nathan said in a loud voice that reverberated throughout the chapel, "Here

comes Uncle Tim!" Those ward members sitting close to us had a good laugh as they watched us scramble to try to get him quiet, but not before he repeated it again.

Memorial Day was spent getting things ready for Mike's arrival including organizing and cleaning Tim's room and sorting through things that belonged to Mike and putting them in the brown bedroom for his use.

Sunday evening we visited Grandma Larsen's grave and took a beautiful bouquet that Grandpa Larsen had ordered for her. On Monday we prepared a basket of lilacs and placed it on Grandma Gooch's grave at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Idaho Falls before going to the airport.

It's touching to visit the cemeteries this time of year and see the flowers and balloons on the graves. It reminds me of the "Circle of Life" and of how much we should love each other and treasure our times together. I am reminded of the sorrow many people bear in the loss of loved ones and how grateful I am that we have had our grandparents around as long as we have.

We are so grateful for Mike's safe return and our prayers are in Paul's behalf inasmuch as we know that he has been going through some tough times.

June 1, 1998

[Mom] It's been a wonderful but hectic week since we welcomed Mike home last Monday. I feel like we are getting acquainted with him all over again and it's fun to have him getting adjusted to civilian life and feeling more at ease in a pair of levis and a T-shirt. He had his first date Friday night. Tim wanted to have a date before leaving Sunday for Boys State so he talked Mike into asking Melissa Hammond to double with him and Marcie.

Thursday night about midnight, Tim came upstairs really sick and spent the rest of the night vomiting. He had the dry heaves so bad that he must have burst some blood vessels in his eyes and they were splotchy and red. He thought that he would be better by date time on Friday night but he was still so sick that he had to call and cancel his date and it left Mike nervous about facing his date alone. I think it worked out alright for him and he had a good

time but he is still feeling awkward around the opposite sex.

The last few days Mike has spent job hunting and trying to get all his mission memorabilia organized. When I took a load of clean clothes down to his bedroom a few minutes ago, it looked like he hadn't made much progress in the organization department, but he assures me that progress is being made.

His job search has been pretty discouraging. He irrigation systems company and at Shepherd Truss and is following up on a lead that Bob Jenks gave him, but nothing has come through yet and he is antsy to get on the job and have some money coming in.

In the meantime, it has been nice for me to have him around a little and he has gotten his dental work and eye exams taken care of. It was fun to be with him yesterday after our block of meetings. Ward members were so good to welcome him home and inquire about his mission. His welcome home will not be until June 14th. If all goes according to plan, Shauntel and Randy will come as well as Steve and Bonnie, John and Laurel, and Becky and Chet.

Sunday I attended Kimball Benson's mission farewell. He will enter the MTC Wednesday, the same day as Laurel's brother, Grant--interesting coincidence. I was happy to touch base with Bonnie's family again; they are such an inspiration. I had a double motive for going, though, since I suspected that Steve and Bonnie might need an extra pair of hands during the meeting to help with their little ones. I knew they were on the program and thought that if they needed me, I could take hall duty while they performed.

It was a beautiful meeting and between the three of us we managed to handle the situation and hear most of the proceedings. They were anxious to get back to Tooele Sunday evening and get the kids back into their own beds and a normal routine. Steve's company is going to keep him close to home for a few months and I know that they are both happy about that.

Wednesday evening was the annual year-end Chambers dinner. It was a thrill to attend with Tim and to take a moment to reflect back on all the years of having kids in Chambers. It has been such a source of joy to be a part of that

select group of kids and parents. It's also been a good experience for Tim to broaden his circle of friends as he has associated with Chambers this year and I think he has been pleasantly surprised at how many of them he really enjoys. He is at Boys State this week and hopefully having a good experience there.

[Dad] Getting Mike home has been a choice experience. As he talks about his mission experiences, I recall parts of my mission and am able to share some memories also. Last night for FHE we watched "Independence Day" at his request. We really enjoyed it, but SaraKay woke up with a bad dream during the night. We were able to get a lot of yard work done here and at Dad's last Saturday. Hopefully, the spraying and trimming will keep things looking nice.

Another involvement on Saturday was helping with the Dutch Oven Dinner for Snake River Daze. Mike Larsen was in charge and we helped with much of the preparation and serving of a great stew, scones, and cobbler meal. We figured that we must have served between 3-400 people and it all happened with hardly a hitch. My gratitude was renewed for the good people we have the privilege of associating with in this community.

[Mom] Mike is sitting here beside me tutoring Tim on his ACT math. This Saturday is the big test day for Tim and he is hoping to have several sessions with Mike this week as well as working with the ACT computer program. Tim starts with Basic American tomorrow morning.

Tonight, Mike got a call from the personnel director at Basic offering him a job as an intern working with the engineers. It pays \$10 an hour and is an 8 to 4 job, five days a week. He has been working this past week for an irrigation systems company and today he had three offers—one from Headstart, one from the school district, and the one from Basic.

Tim arrived home Saturday afternoon after spending the week in Boise at Boys State. I wish I could say that he really enjoyed it but for the most part he endured the experience and was grateful to have it over. He said there were times when he thought he was at boot camp since they had them room in barracks, eat in a mess hall, and the daily routine was rigorous. His favorite part was the guest speakers

including Mike Crapo, Dirk Kempthorne, Governor Batt, and Anne Fox.

Part way through the week Daddy commented that he sure was homesick for Tim. I agreed and reminded him that we had better get used to it with Tim's senior year and graduation only 12 short months away.

[Dad] One of the things Mike missed most on his mission was seeing movies as they came out. Last Friday night we watched "Rainmaker," then we watched the Jazz BB game, and then Mike and I watched "First Contact" together.

I couldn't help but contrast those concepts of power with the Power of the Priesthood. The power to organize matter into worlds—the power to create light and life—the power to control the ministering of angels—the power to perform ordinances that will save people from their sins and the power to lift and ennoble man.

Sunday for Priesthood meeting we had a testimony meeting and I couldn't help but bear testimony of the reality of the power of the Priesthood, the joy I have in the brotherhood of a quorum, and the strength of the faith I see in the young people coming up. We are engaged in a great war between the forces of Satan and the Savior. But we have a strong corps of young warriors, of which you are a part, preserving and building the Kingdom of God.

For home evening this week we watched the video, "An Ensign to the Nations." What an incredible witness of the power of the Priesthood to bless the nations of the earth through the growth of the Church. The tremendous growth of the Church in England and Europe during the last half of the nineteenth century formed the "critical mass" of the Church which propelled its growth in North America in the early years of the twentieth century. The exponential growth in South America, Asia, the islands of the Pacific, and more recently in Africa are further witness of the truth of this Church as a vehicle for delivering the saving ordinances and precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Priesthood.

May 15, 1998

[Dad] It has been a wonderful weekend as we gathered for Mike's mission report. We took advantage of having Shaunnie and Randy here

by having her and Becky play an organ/piano duet. We also had the whole family sing "Faith in Every Footstep" since it is one of Mike's favorite hymns from his mission and he requested it. I didn't realize how much of a missionary song it was; I just thought of it in the context of last year's pioneer and trek celebrations.

With Andrea, Laurel, and Becky getting so close to delivery time, we are excited for them. The sacred opportunity to bring a choice spirit of Heavenly Father's into your home to nourish and teach and train is truly one of the greatest blessings we can have—even in our own development.

My main emphasis at work the past few days has been getting things moving with regard to scheduling, recruiting, and procurement for the Tiger Ear Booth at the Fair. I appreciated getting a Father's Day note from Paul today. In the last paragraph he said, "I wish I could be there for the dinner to listen to your not-so-funny jokes and hear you tell me that, 'It's all in your head.' (I've found out, that's true, by the way)." He is the only one I remember admitting that they have found out how true that statement is. Maybe he is the only one humble enough to admit it in writing.

[Mom] I had a hectic day yesterday getting things organized for our YW trip to Manti this week. One of the chaperones (plus her suburban) has backed out at the last minute and I've been scrambling to replace her and verify arrangements. The weather has been unseasonably cold the last few days and I'm hoping the boast that the pageant has never been rained out in its many years of production will prove true this week.

Daddy will be coming with me as well as SaraKay and Tim will be traveling with the Priests so Mike will be fending for himself. I'm sure he'll get along fine. He has a full agenda planned since one of his girlfriends is leaving on a mission soon and they have planned a date to the temple. Another girlfriend is leaving to start summer term in Provo and he wanted to have one last date with her, too. He is going on splits with the Spanish missionaries Friday night and speaking in the Spanish Branch on Sunday accompanied by Dad and me. They have requested that we do a musical number so we are thinking of doing "Faith in Every Footstep" with just the three of us.

It was a thrill to participate in Mike's mission report. He gave a wonderful talk on the power of the priesthood and we had a lot of compliments on the meeting. The rest of the family attended the block of meetings but I came home and finished preparations for our meal. We invited the Hannis and Ellis' to join us, too, and it worked out well.

It was rewarding to have so many of our immediate family here. It gave Shauntel and Randy a chance to show off Camille. John and Laurel arrived Friday night and brought Julianne with them from Provo. Maren was headed south with her boyfriend, Brock, and so didn't come with them. I learned yesterday that the day they were scheduled to leave for Arizona, Brock wrecked his car (no one was injured) and so I'm not sure what happened with their plans, but we did miss having Maren share the day with us since she has been such a close cousin with Mike.

The most hectic part of the weekend was Sunday morning when everyone was running around trying to get ready and out the door. At 8:50 the phone rang and it was a member of the bishopric wondering if we were on our way since they wanted us there for a short prayer meeting before the meeting began. We hurriedly had family prayer and Daddy and I and Mike made a mad dash for the church. When we finally got seated on the stand I felt so rushed and shook up that I wasn't sure I would have the Spirit with me in my remarks. Prior to Mike's address we sang "Faith in Every Footsteps" and that seemed to set the stage for us and invite the Spirit. It felt wonderful to have it successfully completed. It is such an emotional, financial, and physical drain.

Mike and Tim are enjoying their jobs. As well as working their 40-hour week at Basic, they are moving pipe at the church and mowing lawns. Last night Randy's folks invited us for home evening at 6, Tim had gone to work at 3, Mike had returned from work at 4:30 and Tim was to be home at 11:15. Somewhere in the evening it escaped us that no one had turned off the church sprinklers and moved them. About 10 p.m. I thought of it and went into SaraKay's room and awoke Mike who was asleep on her bed trying to get her to go to sleep. I told him that the sprinklers at the church were still on. He left to go move them and didn't return for

quite a while so Daddy got up and got dressed and left.

Soon Tim came home and I could hear him rummaging through the frig and cupboards foraging for a midnight snack. In a few minutes the back door opened and in walked Mike and Dad. Tim was surprised to learn they had been over at the church in the dark trying to repair a broken riser.

Daddy came to bed and then I got up because I remembered that Mike said he had an ant infestation in his room the night before and he kept waking up with them crawling on him. I went downstairs and began spraying bug killer everywhere and the thought came to me how ridiculous the last few hours had been and that we sure do some crazy things to keep this family afloat.

Anyway, morning dawned at 5:30 with piano lessons, work, and other demands and here we are one day closer to school starting and funds being ready for another year. Thank goodness for good jobs, willing hearts, and good health!

June 22, 1998

[Mom] Although I know that most of you have heard the news by now, for Paul's benefit and as a matter of record, let me rehearse the events of last week and the arrival of another beautiful granddaughter, Madison Seely. Becky had been pretty miserable for several weeks and had an appointment with her doctor on Wednesday. When she was examined, the doctor was surprised to find that she was dilated to a four. She told Becky to expect the baby in the next few days even though it wasn't due until July 13th.

That evening she started into labor and about eight she convinced Chet that they needed to go to the hospital. When they arrived, the nurses assured them that Becky was indeed in labor and so Chet phoned me to let me know that they were in the hospital and things were moving ahead. I told him to call us when the baby was born, no matter what the hour. I knew from past experience that I would be up off and on all night wondering and worrying and a phone call, despite the hour, would be welcome. About 12:30 he called and said they had a 6 lb. 12oz. dark haired little girl. Becky had gotten along well and everything was fine.

Daddy, Tim, SaraKay and I were scheduled to leave the next morning at 7 a.m. on a Priest's Laurel super activity to Salt Lake and the Manti Pageant and I hated to leave but the doctor felt that Becky and the baby would probably need to stay in the hospital until Friday night anyway, so we went ahead with our plans and left the next morning for Utah. Tim traveled with the Priests and Daddy drove SaraKay and me and some Laurels.

Upon arrival in Salt Lake, we toured the Relief Society building and had a member of the YW General Board speak to us. Following a picnic, we went to the Primary Children's hospital for a tour and presented them with three quilts we made in a Young Women's activity. It was very touching to see some of the children who are patients in the hospital and we couldn't help thinking about Megan (AlvaLu's granddaughter) and the many times she has been back and forth for treatments and surgeries.

Following the tour, we continued on to Nephi, checked into our motel, and then went to the Manti pageant. Although I had seen it before, it was still very inspiring and it was fun to share the experience with SaraKay and Tim. It was after midnight when we got back to our motel. Friday we went to Raging Waters and spent several hours there on the slides and in the wave pool. It would have been more fun for SaraKay if she had had a friend along but we didn't have a single spot in any of the cars for one more passenger so she was on her own. I think she still had a great time.

Saturday I spent part of the day with Becky and Chet but they had everything under control and so I only stayed a few hours and then came home to get things put together for Father's Day and our Sunday assignments. Mike had been asked to talk in the Spanish Branch and we were asked to say a few words about the formation of the branch and our involvement.

We attended our own sacrament meeting first to hear Jared Jenks' mission report and then we hurried over to the other stake center for their meeting. We used earphones to understand Mike's message since he delivered it in Spanish. What a treat to attend the branch and see the members! I was surprised at how many women and children attended and several of them came up afterwards to visit with us about some of the previous members of the branch.

I really admire the people who assist with the branch and their families who attend, also. The branch president is Allan Young and his wife, Jackie, and four young children attend the branch even though they do not speak any Spanish.

Following our block of meetings, all of us but Tim (he drew a Sunday shift at work) drove to Idaho Falls and spent a fun afternoon holding Madison and visiting. She is such a tiny little thing and to think that she is nearly two pounds bigger than Rachel was at birth! I forget how quickly they grow. It's interesting to compare the size of Christine (a year in July) with Camille (four months) and now Madison. It was a nice coincidence that Madison was born before Shauntel and Randy left for Utah and they were able to see her.

Shauntel and Randy left Salt Lake this morning for Iowa. I have had them on my mind all morning and have been feeling a little melancholy about them being gone. It's funny how having them around for a couple of weeks, even though they weren't right here all the time, makes me miss them all the more now that they are gone. It was so fun to get acquainted with Camille. She is growing leaps and bounds and is so responsive. The date for the sealing in the Idaho Falls temple is set for September 26th. They will fly in for the weekend and return the next Monday for Randy's schooling. I know Stephani is trying to arrange to fly in for the event if at all possible. I'm sure it will be a wonderful day!

When we arrived home Friday evening Mike mentioned that he had had quite a date the night before. He had arranged to take a high school friend, Sharee Mortimer, to the temple Thursday night. She is leaving in a week for a mission and he wanted to spend some time with her before she left. He got off work early, drove to Pingree to pick her up, and then they drove to Idaho Falls to visit Becky in the hospital and then to the temple. When they arrived at the temple and got to the front desk, he realized that he had left his recommend in his other white shirt pocket.

He knew they would have time to return home and get his recommend and still make the last session so they hurried out to the van only to find that he had locked his keys inside. Luckily

Sharee's sister lived only a few blocks from the temple so they proceeded to walk to her house.

Mike knew that all of us were out of town and he tried to figure out what to do when he thought of a plan. He called Jared Jenks and had him come over to the house, go down into Mike's room, find the recommend, and then get the extra set of keys to the van off the keyboard. Jared then drove to Idaho Falls, meeting them at the temple, and they hurried in to get into the eight o'clock session. All in all, it wasn't exactly the date of his dreams and he arrived home very late and frazzled. Thank goodness for Jared Jenks and his willingness to help "a friend in need".

We heard from many of you yesterday for Father's Day. Stephani commented that she had tried so many times unsuccessfully to get through to Dad that she told Lindsay she was beginning to regret being one of ten children. Sorry for the busy phone lines.

Tim and Mike have been working pretty steady hours and scrambling some days to keep up with lawns and pipe moving. This week will be different because Mike is working 1-9 pm instead of his usual 8-4 schedule. Tim gets his assignments by the day and so it gets pretty hairy at times.

Summer is in full swing. SaraKay is taking swimming lessons this week and next and we'll be going to the Richards' reunion in Utah next weekend for the 4th of July. Daddy has been working hard to keep our yard looking nice and it has been such a relief for me not to have a garden to look after this summer. I don't know how we would have managed with all the coming and going we've done. Our thoughts are with Dave and Andrea the next few weeks as they approach her due date.

[Dad] Father's Day was a special time for me to think about my role and the influence my father has had on me. I've had a greater appreciation for my father as I have had my family and experienced their "growing pains". It is especially rewarding to watch my children in their roles as parents and watch their growth and the broadening of their perspective.

June 30, 1998

[Mom] The main focus last week was on the Seely's as they continued with their adjustment

and dealt with the problems that come with preemie babies. Early in the week it was discovered that Madison had jaundice and so her doctor arranged for a light for her bed that shined on her during her frequent naps. She didn't seem to mind it and when she was tested at the hospital on Wednesday, she was already showing signs of improvement. By Thursday, the jaundice was pretty much gone and she was starting to gain back her birth weight. Becky has been trying to nurse and it has been quite a challenge with Madison's irregular schedule. I'm not much help when it comes to that facet of motherhood so Becky has relied on advice from Stephani and others.

Each day Becky feels a little stronger but each night has proven to be a marathon as Madison awakens about every hour for a feeding and sometimes decides at three in the morning that it is time to stay awake for a while. Being as close as we are, I have been able to make frequent visits and I spent part of Saturday and Wednesday with them allowing Becky some time to sleep. When I've made my daily phone calls to check on the status of mother and baby, I can tell by the tenor of Becky's voice if she had a horrendous night. I'm sure that most of you can identify with this and empathize with them regarding the first few months with a newborn. It's such a wonderful thing when they finally get sturdier and on a schedule.

I am so grateful that Andrea's mother is visiting them after the baby is born so that she will have the help she needs. Hopefully she will not have the trauma with her tail bone that has been so much a part of her lengthy recovery with her other pregnancies. Her doctor seems sensitive to what needs to be done to help her get through this delivery with less damage and long-term pain. Our prayers are with you, Andrea.

John and Laurel have been in Tennessee with Laurel's family. I'm sure it was fun and a good getaway. We are looking forward to seeing them at the Richards' reunion this weekend. Steve and Bonnie are also going to come although they have opted to not spend the nights. I think it's a wise decision and I'm grateful that they live close enough to the campground that they can travel back and forth without too much inconvenience.

All of my brothers and sisters are supposed to be there as well as Grandpa and Grandma

Richards. Daddy has permission from the council to use their pickup so packing up may not be as much of an ordeal as it has been other years.

Deniece and Christine are flying in tomorrow and will be in Salt Lake until Christene moves in at Ricks on the 11th. They will stay with Mom and Dad and then do some shopping in Salt Lake, stay a couple days with me before we take Christine to Rexburg. I'm looking forward to time with Deniece; seems like we hardly know each other anymore.

Tim's good news of the week was that he got a good enough score on the ACT that he will get into Ricks College and probably get a scholarship. We experienced a small miracle. He had been working with the computer program for ACT preparation but wasn't catching on to the math. One night Mike sat with him for several hours and the two of them worked on sample problems. Mike talked through how the people behind the ACT think. He helped Tim see that part of the reason he was stumped by the problems was that they were purposely written to trick him. Once Mike pointed out some subtle tricks and wordings that were calculated to confuse the student, Tim caught on and gained some confidence in his ability to "psyche out" the test. What a blessing that proved to be!

Last weekend Tim attended a retreat for the student body officers. He came home tired but said they got a lot of the year's planning completed and outlined.

Sunday he had an interview with President Van Orden and he was called to be the Stake Co-chairman over the Stake Youth Council. He seemed very flattered and pleased. I am beginning to get nervous about his senior year. He has quite a lot of responsibilities and I know from working through this with some of you other kids that things can be hectic. Thank goodness he won't have a job after-school like most of you did that last year.

SaraKay is looking forward to her baptism on August 1st. Anyone who would like to join us for that day is welcome. That is the day we return from a five-day girl's camp so I'm sure things won't be very tidy or organized.

Daddy's Wood Badge course is quickly approaching and his excitement is growing. Saturday night we attended a dinner for all staff

members and spouses and as a part of the evening Daddy had asked each of them to share an experience from their courtship days. What a fun activity! It was obvious that some of the men were telling the story from their own perspective by the comments inserted by their wives, but it proved to be an enjoyable (and hilarious) exercise and helped us all to get better acquainted.

It was obvious how respected Daddy is among that group of fine men and women. I think he will look back on his Wood Badge years as some of his favorite times.

One staff member is married to an old college friend of mine, Kathryn Smith Miller. Over the years I had heard that she had rheumatoid arthritis and was severely crippled. When she came to the dinner with her husband, she looked paper thin and I noticed her hands and legs and feet were gnarled. She remembered me and we took time to visit about our lives. Within the last few years they have discovered that she does not have arthritis at all but polio syndrome. This is a fairly new disease that is showing up in people over 40 who received polio vaccinations that were flawed. The result is that the vaccine is still in their blood stream and it comes back to haunt them causing paralysis and crippling.

Even though they have now diagnosed her correctly, the prognosis is not very bright and she will live out her life in pain and with severe limitations. She was a mother of three small children when the ailment began and she had two more children before her health deteriorated. I couldn't believe what she has endured over the last 24 years since it first manifested itself. What a trial! She is such a lovely sweet lady and I came away grateful for health and strength but also inspired by her courage to endure and not get bitter.

This week I'm focusing on the reunion. Summer is flying by and soon it will be time for school again. We've loved having Mike around although we've seen the difference in our grocery bill and I don't get through two weeks on a tank of gas anymore.

[Dad] Last night I missed FHE and went to a political meeting in Arco. I rode with Stan Williams and visited on the way out and back. I appreciate his friendship. The trip really made

me appreciate the circumstances and location of our home. It would sure be tough (as well as expensive) to drive that far for just about everything that goes on. I'm sure those people feel isolated, and they are. I thought about Dave Fullmer and all the trips he has made for Wood Badge beadings and meetings for years.

Sunday was a great day. I had two lessons to give and thoroughly enjoyed my teaching responsibilities. Sunday School class was about King David and the thoughts and then actions that led to his downfall. The process of replacing rather than dwelling on bad thoughts was emphasized. In High Priests we were discussing the Holy Ghost; I enjoy the insights from other members of the quorum.

We went to the Church for the satellite broadcast of the Provo Freedom Festival. The music was provided by a 2,000-voice family choir led by Mac Wilberg and a National Guard band from Spokane Washington. President Monson was the keynote speaker and did a wonderful job. An astronaut painted a beautiful verbal picture of the earth from space and there were some accompanying photos shown that were awesome. He bore a sweet testimony of knowing that God lives and that the United States is certainly a favored land.

The girl that was the winner of the annual freedom speech contest in Provo gave a wonderful talk and received a standing ovation for the content and delivery of her masterful talk. All in all, it was a wonderful experience that certainly enhanced our testimonies and our appreciation for this great land!

Mom mentioned our Wood Badge staff get-together on Saturday night. It was a delightful experience and I was so glad we did it. We were both amazed at how many of the wives were returned missionaries. That morning I had gone to Island Park Scout Camp to be a small part of the wrap-up of the course that has been there this past week. In visiting with one of the participants, he said that he was an ophthalmologist and that five years ago he had bought a vision care business and had spent \$15,000 on courses and a business consultant for that new business. He said he had learned more in one week at Wood Badge for \$140.00 than he got for his \$15,000 expenditure. A pretty good testimonial for Wood Badge!

July 6, 1998

[Dad] We had a great time at the Richards Family Reunion, July 2-4 at "Brighton Meadows." We had some quality time with each of Sue's siblings and their families. It has been five years since the last reunion and a lot of changes in size and marital status of kids. We were fortunate to be able to take the council pickup and hauled a lot of additional equipment that we thought might be useful.

One of the highlights of the week was being able to bless Chet and Becky's baby--Madison. She is growing and changing each day and is such a cute little baby (no bias!). Chet's family was there and it was his sister's birthday--so we had a real party.

Becky is recovering from the birth and is getting to look more like her "before-pregnancy" self. She and Chet were in charge of a float in the 4th of July parade on Saturday and it took the Governor's trophy. And then they were involved with the Melaleuca sponsored concert by the Idaho Falls Symphony and the fireworks display. It was televised and we were able to enjoy it at home and have our own fireworks display in the back yard.

[Mom] Last week was a whirlwind as we gathered, borrowed, cooked, shopped, and then loaded and packed everything into the pickup. We left for the reunion about 9 on Thursday morning. I had been making notes to myself for several weeks, writing down the things we would need to take. Because so many family members were traveling long distances and didn't have the space to bring much, Kathy and I provided the cooking supplies for the family during the three-day stay. Then, of course, there were the tents, tarps, sleeping bags, blankets, suitcases, pillows, coats, Dutch ovens, coolers, rubber rafts, and sundry other items that were needed. By the time we left, we felt like we had pretty much loaded up the garage and storage room.

The one thing we did leave home that we really wanted to take with us was Tim. He had asked for so many weekends off for family occasions, student body retreats, Chambers activities, and other things that he just didn't feel like he could ask for another weekend, especially a holiday. He stayed home and fended for himself but he was really missed by all the cousins. We felt fortunate that Mike attended. It has been five

years since our last reunion and a lot has changed with so many marriages and new family members. Steve and Bonnie and family were able to be there as were John and Laurel. Nate's family were all there except Chelsea. Chuck and Brenda were missing Tiffany. Kathy and Dick missed Bret. Lisa and Don and family all attended and Deniece and Christine were there representing their bunch. Grandpa and Grandma Richards came up for each days' activities and then returned home in the evenings.

The camp was in the mountains above Salt Lake. It is a girls' camp for the Brighton Stake and has a small lake, volleyball pit, picnic tables, tent sites, water, flushing toilets, and cooking areas. The lake provided us with hours of fun taking the little ones for raft rides and the more adventurous cousins swam as well. We shared the lake with a beaver and also a couple of moose we saw on two occasions. The toddlers enjoyed playing in a nearby stream. Evenings brought volleyball games with the less active of us cheering the kids on. You can imagine how competitive the games were!

On the first evening we played a raucous game of Mafia. The second evening we had a program with each family represented. Lane told about their upcoming departure (July 24) for Alabama and graduate school, Deniece gave an update on Curtis in Italy, Don reviewed their last few months and their move to Arizona, Mike gave a short report of his mission, Tera expressed her feelings about her upcoming wedding (July 18), and Chad told a little about his experiences as project manager for the Billings temple. SaraKay played her violin, Kathy told a little about Grandpa and Grandma and some of the challenges they are facing at this time in their lives (they were not able to attend the program since they left before dark for home) and Daddy completed the program with a beautiful trumpet solo, "Faith in Every Footstep". It was a special evening and I think we all left feeling grateful to be a part of the family and enjoy the relationships we do.

Saturday morning we broke camp and headed for home about 10 a.m. It was so delightful to have the use of the scout pickup. It made the trip so pleasant. I was especially grateful for all the equipment we took and shared. Daddy is such a great guy to have around in the

mountains—he knows what to do and he is handy with all sorts of projects. Just before Grandpa and Grandma Richards left on Friday to return home, Daddy played "Come, Come Ye Saints" for them on the trumpet that Grandpa gave him a few years ago. It was a touching scene as Grandpa expressed his appreciation to Dad and they embraced.

We spent Sunday with Becky and Chet. They have a beautiful little girl and life is beginning to settle down for them. Chet's parents and siblings came from Utah for the blessing and it was fun to have some time with them again. Bonnie came with Christine and they sat in front of us during the sacrament meeting. Christine was looking all over, trying to get to Bonnie's glasses and earrings, jumping up and down and eating Cheerios to stay occupied. I couldn't help but smile at how things change in a few short months as babies grow and come into their own. Madison slept peacefully most of the meeting, nestled on Chet's lap, oblivious to what was going on around her.

Part way through the meeting Daddy took Christine to give Bonnie a breather and she seemed pretty content to be with him for the balance of the time. It was fun to be a part of another ward's fast and testimony meeting and hear the beautiful expressions of gratitude for God and country.

My thoughts have been on Andrea and her upcoming delivery. She is scheduled to have the baby on the 22nd and her mother is going to be with the family to give her the help she will need. How I wish we lived closer and could share in this special time with them.

Next week Steph, Lin, and kids are coming for a visit. Hopefully we can make it a memorable stay by doing a few fun things while they are here. This week SaraKay is having a birthday party to celebrate her eighth birthday. Needless to say, she is excited and is counting the minutes until her guests arrive.

July 14, 1998

[Dad] Yesterday was a special day as Sue and SaraKay accompanied me to Camp Little Lemhi. I was hauling the last load of tent platforms to camp and asked them if they wanted to go along. It was a beautiful drive! This time of year the hills and valleys are cloaked in such a broad array of greens. We thoroughly enjoyed the time

together! I couldn't help thinking about Commissariat Paul and the time he spent at Little Lemhi and the influence he had there.

Sunday we attended our sacrament meeting and then went to Pocatello to share in Rick's meetings and to stand in the circle with him as he confirmed Jonathan, who was baptized the day before. It was good for us to be there and I know it meant a lot to Rick and Terry. They have such a lovely family and Terry's family is always so supportive and friendly. It was gratifying to see Rick perform that priesthood function for his son and to feel the love and unity in their home. Truly one of the greatest blessings we can enjoy is the Priesthood in our homes and obedient men to exercise it in blessing their families.

Last Friday was the Pre-course orientation for WV2-107-2-98, the Wood Badge course I have the privilege of directing. That means that we are one month away from starting. We had a great time with the participants and are looking forward to the course.

We had a lot of political involvement last week also. Wednesday night, the County central committee gathered at Jensen's Grove for a BBQ and meeting. It was well attended and the most lively and extensive gathering of Republicans in Bingham County for many years. It is gratifying to see the good people that are willing to take an active role in the political process.

Thursday night was a gathering at Keith and Karen Esplin's to meet and visit with Mike Crapo, candidate for the US Senate. He certainly handles himself well in those kinds of settings and has a solid feel of integrity and common sense. Tim's quintet also sang and did very well.

[Mom] Dad's description of our trip yesterday was more eloquent than any I could write so just let me say "amen" to his thoughts. Usually I'm too involved to go with him on business trips but I'm so grateful that I did. I felt rejuvenated by the beautiful scenery and our uninterrupted visit.

The last few days have been full of phone calls from concerned parents and teachers who were soliciting my support in a situation at the middle school. It's always a challenge for me to give unscheduled time for school board calls and the last few days have been no exception. Yesterday morning I made a phone call to Elzo (the superintendent) and rehearsed with him the concerns that had been expressed. I know there

will be a group at board meeting tonight and I've learned that he needs advanced warning in order to do the research necessary to address the concerns that will be voiced.

My thoughts this morning have been with Andrea. Tomorrow she is having labor induced and hopefully everything will go fine. Her mother arrived last Thursday and is on hand to assist with the recovery. What a blessing! Having Becky and Chet close has made me realize how much we've missed with the rest of you. We're so proud of each of you and we recognize what a blessing you are to the communities where you reside, but it's hard to have you so far away. David promised that he would call the minute the baby arrived so hopefully we won't have to wait too long tomorrow to hear the good news. Our prayers are with you, Andrea.

It was a treat to entertain my sister, Deniece, and Christine this past weekend. They arrived Thursday evening and spent most of Friday and part of Saturday shopping and getting Christine settled in her apartment in Rexburg. Mike and Tim arranged for a date Saturday evening and lined up Christine with Brandon Hawker. They went to a lot of work to make it special and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

It's been nice to have Mike and Tim go on some double dates this summer. The biggest challenge is getting their work schedules to jive. Mike has been on a 3 to 11 p.m. shift all week and Tim has had 7pm-7am schedule to contend with. That is his least favorite shift. It is almost impossible to get enough sleep in the daytime to completely secure you for that 12-hour night shift. He comes home wasted and heads downstairs to sleep it off.

Last Sunday Dad and I were invited to participate in the settings apart of the stake youth co-chairmen. It was a sweet occasion to be present as a blessing was pronounced on Tim in conjunction with the setting apart. Whenever I get worried about Tim's senior year and all his responsibilities, I'm grateful that at least he won't have to juggle a work schedule along with everything else.

We have a month and three days before school resumes for the coming year. This summer has flown by! After Stephani's visit, girls camp, and SaraKay's baptism my summer is going to settle down. Daddy has Wood Badge the second week

of August so the pressure is mounting for him. Tomorrow Steph and Linds are arriving. SaraKay and I have been making plans for some fun excursions including swimming, fishing at Jackson's trout farm, and a campout with a wiener roast and tents. It's fun for SaraKay to have her nieces and nephews come to visit. It gives her some interaction that she longs for.

July 20, 1998

[Mom] It has been an eventful week. As you are all aware, Joseph David Larsen arrived on Wednesday, July 15th at about 7 pm. We knew that Andrea was having labor induced that morning at 9 a.m. and we waited all day for the phone call informing us that the baby had arrived. There are so many unknowns and things that can go wrong that it is always a relief to have it over and know that both mother and baby are doing well. Joseph weighed six and a half pounds and was 19 and a half inches long. Laurel (Andrea's mother) is with them for a couple of weeks helping with this transition time for the family.

Andrea seems to have weathered the delivery better this time. She has been able to sit and move about with less discomfort than she experienced with Laurel and Angela and we are so grateful for that. Thanks to everyone for your prayers in her behalf.

Steph and Linds arrived Thursday and we've had a fun time with the kids. Friday we went swimming and Saturday we went to Jackson's trout farm and tried our hand at fishing. We scrounged up some old poles and even took a few minutes worming to get our nightcrawlers for bait. When we arrived at the trout farm, we learned that all the baby fish that are usually kept in holding pens had died during last year's flood. I had wanted the kids to see that part of the farm but we had to settle for just fishing. It was a great place for kids to fish because the pond was heavily stocked and each time we would cast in our line, several fish would rush right over and nibble on the bait.

The last two days we have stayed close to home and the kids have played on the trampoline and swing set. Sunday evening we pitched the dome tent and put it on the trampoline so SaraKay, Sam, and Josh could spend the night outdoors. It was a warm night and very pleasant in the tent.

I stayed with the group until Steph and Linds, Mike, and Tim returned from Idaho Falls and their visit with Becky and Chet. Katie and Linds were going to go hiking the next day so Katie went to bed in the house to insure a decent night's sleep. SaraKay thought we should tell stories until we got sleepy so that is what we did. Sam wanted to tell spooky stories but I worried that Josh (and me) would have bad dreams so we talked him out of that idea.

Part way through the slumber party Daddy turned on the patio light and came out to bother us. He got under the trampoline and bounced us up and down and then he made scary noises and created a monster shadow on the side of the tent. It certainly added to the excitement of the evening and it was nearly 11 pm before we finally got the bunch to settle down and go to sleep.

Mike joined the party when he arrived home and babysat for us so the rest of us could sleep indoors. Last night SaraKay and Katie had a turn. It was a much quieter night since they both took books to read and flashlights and by the time Tim joined them, they were ready to call it a night.

For home evening we had a talent show and each of the kids performed for us. It was really fun to see the progress of Steph's family as she has worked with them on the piano. SaraKay played her violin and Tim sang the songs he competed with last year. The final number was Daddy playing his trumpet.

Becky came today to spend the day with us since Chet is on a business trip. This week Steve and Bonnie will be at Alpine and we'll see them on Saturday afternoon. Bonnie's sister, Julie, is having her welcome home this Sunday and the family is gathering for that.

Shauntel called to see how we were getting along and I wished that we could somehow transport her here to visit for a few hours with the rest of us. Randy is enjoying his residency although his hours are long and stressful.

Mike and Tim continue to work and gather funds for school. Mike will leave for BYU in just 5 weeks! We have not received word from Paul regarding whether he is getting his mail or not. Hopefully it is getting through. The president told us to number each letter so he could see if some were missing. How discouraging for Paul!

[Dad] Work has been busy and demanding but rewarding. I feel good about the way things are coming together for my Wood Badge course next month.

Last Saturday we took Steph and Linds with us to Little Lemhi for the Executive Board meeting. It was a great trip for the four of us! The meal was great with especially wonderful scones and honey-butter. I had a presentation to make regarding James E. West Fellowship awards, and I also played "Retreat" for the retiring of the flag. On the way home we stopped at Baskin Robbins in Idaho Falls for some ice cream and returned home to find all well.

The kids have wanted to sleep out on the trampoline, but they were concerned about the mosquitos and bugs, so we set up the dome tent on the trampoline and that worked wonderfully. I think this trip to Idaho is going to be a memorable one for Josh, Sam, and Katie.

It has been so hot that I thought it would be a good idea to get a swamp cooler. I was able to round up the last one in Pocatello yesterday, but after talking it through, we decided to return it and save our money in case we have to help Mike get into school or a car.

July 27, 1998

[Mom] It's late and I'm going to need to make this message short. Daddy is outside putting a tarp over the trailer that is packed with all the equipment and gear for Girls' Camp. He, SaraKay, and I will be leaving about eight tomorrow morning to haul the things to camp and then spend a large part of the day setting up and readying things for the rest of the participants who will arrive on Wednesday. I have really appreciated Daddy's help the last few days as I have gathered my personal gear as well as organized the ward's equipment.

I'm excited to attend the camp with the YW although this year it is organized in a different manner and each girl will be assigned to a camp comprised of girls from throughout the stake. Some have been apprehensive about not being in our own ward camps, but I feel like it will have its advantages and I'm looking forward to getting better acquainted with some leaders and girls from other wards.

The one drawback of the week is that I will be gone until Saturday afternoon and unable to give much time or attention to SaraKay's

upcoming baptism. She will be baptized Saturday afternoon at five and then there is a ward summer party at seven that we will be attending as a family. As far as I know, Steve, Rachel, and Nathan, John and Laurel, and Becky and Chet will all be able to come. Tim is going to baptize her and she will be confirmed the next day in sacrament meeting. She has been very excited to take this important step!

The first of September she will begin taking piano lessons from Linnea Hammond and will have three piano and one violin lesson each month from Linnea. On the violin week, both she and Angela will attend and Linnea will critique what they have been doing and give them tips. Colleen Winder will continue to teach them the other three weeks of the month. This is a rather unusual setup but I have given it a lot of thought and feel like it will accomplish what we want to do. At this point SaraKay is willing and so teachable and I'm trying to make the most of it.

Today SaraKay had her last lesson from Lona Mae and it was a little sad to realize that we won't be going there anymore. She has certainly been an important part of our lives for a lot of years! She is a dear friend and hopefully making this change will not diminish the love and respect we have for one another.

Tim and four friends spent the weekend in Utah shopping for school clothes. They attended a mission farewell on Sunday and returned home Sunday evening. Mike spent all of Saturday hiking to Table Rock with some friends and arrived home tired and sunburned.

Daddy spent the bulk of the day sprucing up the yard. He has kept it looking so nice this year. I got several pickings of berries off our patch and made jam—a staple of Mike and Tim's daily lunches.

We have had some wonderful opportunities the last few weeks to have some special times with family members. We so enjoyed Steph and Lind's visit and SaraKay loved having the chance to play nonstop with Katie, Sam, and Josh. Steve and Bonnie were here for a short visit over the weekend and we always enjoy them. SaraKay becomes the little mother to Rachel, Nathan, and Christine and she thoroughly enjoys that role. Sunday Mark, Rita, Jessica, and JoEllen came for an overnight stay. I invited Becky and Chet; Steve and Bonnie

stayed long enough Sunday afternoon to get reacquainted.

Jeff will be attending Ricks College this fall and so I'm sure we will see more of them. Jessica's made marked improvement in her walking although she is still only able to mouth her words and her movements are very labored.

Whenever I spend any time around Jessica I find myself asking some tough questions regarding adversity. How can it possibly be fair that one so young and full of promise would be asked to bear this burden? How does a person go through a trial such as this without becoming bitter when the trial goes on and on? I'm sure it is heartbreaking for Mark and Rita that many of the normal experiences of mortality will be delayed or denied for Jessica.

How would it be to face that reality each day and still find reason to rejoice. How would you as a parent balance the needs of all the children with a child who has so many needs that there is hardly time for anything else. And then the question I keep coming back to is, "Have I made a special effort to extend love and concern and try to brighten her day as much as I can?"

[Dad] I can hardly wait to get to Pasa La Coma and spend the day setting up a camp that I won't ever get the chance to use. Actually, I am excited, for it has been a long time since I've been there—and I am glad to be able to help Sue set up camp and to use my experience, equipment, and skills to benefit her. It looks like we are going to have a beautiful day for it and I love to be in the hills and close to nature!

I am reminded of the following quote: "If you stand very still in the heart of the woods, you will hear many wonderful things. The snap of a twig and the wind in the trees and the whirr of invisible wings. If you stand very still in the turmoil of life, and wait for the voice from within, You will be led down the quiet pathways of wisdom and peace in a mad world of chaos and din. If you stand very still and hold to your faith, you will get all the help that you ask, You will draw from the silence the things that you need—hope and courage and strength for your task." Taking time to be still and meditate and draw from the Spirit what you need—regardless of your environment—is an important habit to develop. In the woods, or in the chaos of life in El Salvador, or Texas, or California, or Utah, or

Iowa, or Minnesota, or Arizona, or Idaho (that about covers the world doesn't it?) –if you stand very still and hold to your faith you will get all the help that you need!

It was beautiful in Wolverine. As we rode back over the "W" I remembered the times as a kid that we would go to a certain place just past "Forty Horse Cave" for picnics and the family tree. I thought about John's winter campout there when he filled a boot full of blood and cracked his patella. I remembered winter campouts also where we had nearly frozen to death, or the kids thought so. I also had a vision of my Mom as a young mother–beautiful, long dark hair, full of enthusiasm, big smile, helping us to roast marshmallows around the fire. A lot of memories and thoughts came flooding through my mind as we drove home.

August 3, 1998

[Dad] Slow down world, and let me catch up!! Sometimes it seems like there is just too much going on to be able to keep up and I can't get everything done. I know both Sue and I feel tired out and like the nights aren't long enough to allow full recovery and the days are too full to allow for a nap, so we just have to keep running.

Last night we had a delightful home evening at Rick & Terry's. Rick had barbecued some fish that Terry marinated in Teriyaki sauce, that had been caught by Jonathan and Jacob when they went fishing at Chesterfield reservoir with their Grandpa Howard. It was absolutely out of this world!!! And then to top it off, they made home-made ice cream with Butterfinger balls in it. What a delightful feast!

We had a good time with Gary and Linda and Roger and Mindy and their sweet kids. It's hard to believe that their twins are almost a year old. SaraKay and Jonathan had a great time together also. We really missed having Tim and Mike–Tim went to work at 7:00 and was working all night and Mike was working overtime and wouldn't get home until after 7:00. He was pleased that the last 4 hours he worked, he was earning \$15.00 an hour.

This last week was rather harried with taking Mom to girl's camp on Tuesday and having her gone until Saturday. I was reminded again how hard it would be to play both parent roles. But I had some special times with SaraKay as she was my little shadow with her mother gone.

Thursday night we are supposed to get the water after the Hanni's are through. For some reason, they didn't send it down to us, so I went up to the canal and turned the water down about 10:30, after my meeting. I set the alarm for 2:00 a.m. to go and turn it off. For some reason, I awoke about midnight and got up to check the water and found that the neighbors were flooded and we hadn't gotten a drop because the tin was still in a head gate. With a full stream of water coming down there could have been a lot of flooding for them if I hadn't been awakened when I was. Needless to say, I was shook up enough that it wasn't very easy to get back to sleep. I couldn't really relax until after 2:00 and I had shut the water off!

The next day, after getting Tim and Mike off to work, SaraKay and I went to Twin Falls to pick up the sugar and powdered milk for the Tiger Ear booth. She was so tired, she slept all the way there. When we got to Blackfoot to unload, she was able to help me by pulling 55# bags of powdered milk back to where I could reach them. So we went to Arctic Circle as a reward for her efforts. John and Laurel got here that night after having supper and a good visit with Chet and Becky.

Saturday we had a special breakfast of bacon, eggs, and hash browns and were excited to get Sue home about 11 :00. We then had a lot of cleaning and organizing to do with camp equipment and left-over food.

The most special part of the day was the baptism for SaraKay. It was our ward's turn to conduct the baptism, so Brother Cook asked us to put together the program. Becky and Mom did the music, Steve got here just in time to give a prayer, Laurel did the closing prayer, John sang a special number, Mike and Chet gave the talks and Tim did the baptism. He and SaraKay had practiced and Tim was obviously moved by the opportunity to perform that special priesthood ordinance.

After that, we had a ward party at 7:00 p.m. and sang a couple of numbers on the program for that. John, Steve, Mike, Tim and I sang, "My Country 'Tis of Thee" a cappella, and Sue and I sang, "I'm Proud to be an American" with SaraKay helping us on the chorus. Sunday, for SaraKay's confirmation, I had some distinct impressions about her blessing and it was a special fast and testimony meeting.

Yesterday, I began calling all the people who were signed up for Wood Badge, because I knew that a few of them were questionable. There were 9 of the 47 that dropped off the list, so it looks like one of my problems is going to be overstaffing for the number of squads we will have.

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's account of last week's activities. It was quite a marathon for all of us. I really appreciated all the work the family did to keep the house orderly and the yard nice.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at girl's camp. It was very rewarding to be able to interact with young women and adult leaders who were casual acquaintances before the week began, and to be able to work together and feel that love and respect had developed. This year we were organized into units comprised of girls from every ward and supervised by Jr. leaders. As the adults in the unit, we gave shadow leadership and tried to give the girls the opportunity to lead out. I was very pleased with how successful it was.

I appreciated the family gathering for SaraKay's baptism. She was so excited to have extended family here and many of her friends and teachers as well as bishopric members and home teachers took time to attend. I dread having Daddy gone to Wood Badge but I'm grateful that they have trimmed down the time. I know how important it is that things are secure here at home while he is gone; hopefully I can carry on successfully.

Mike and Tim have been getting in some good hours at work and are to the point that they are counting down the days until school starts. It's been such a blessing to have the good jobs at Basic. We are still looking for a car for Mike although he isn't totally convinced that he will need one. David Hammond brought by some job apps and both positions are close enough to campus that Mike could ride his bike. He would really like to see how his finances shake out before he jumps into a car payment but at the same time, he knows he would have more time and connections here than in Utah to get a car.

Paul seems to be thoroughly enjoying his mission and is nearing the year mark. We are so grateful that he is healthy and that he has had good companions. That makes all the difference. We rejoice in the new babies that

have joined our family and our prayers turn to Laurel as she approaches her due date.

August 9, 1998

[Mom] Daddy spent last Friday and Saturday setting up at Little Lemhi for this week's Wood Badge Course and then came home for Sunday and left about three to return to camp. The course will run Monday through Saturday. Unlike previous years when Dad has been gone 10 days, this course will be condensed. Daddy seemed pleased with the efficiency of the staff in getting things set up and organized. He was excited for the participants to arrive today and complete this training that has been nearly a year in the planning.

Following his year as director he will not be as involved with it again. He welcomes a change although he has some wonderful memories and friendships from his last five years. We are going to miss having him around this week, but he worked hard to get the yard watered so I would have a minimum of work in his absence.

Tim is a victim of Basic American's summer layoffs and so he is out mowing lawns and has several projects that he wants to complete before starting school Wednesday. His duties on the student council have already begun. I hope he will use his day-timer to ensure that we both stay sane. Last night was a typical example. He agreed to take the missionaries on splits for the evening and about 7:30 I received a phone call from the quartet asking me where he was. I had to tell them that he was on splits with the missionaries and wouldn't be able to make it. When he returned about 10 from working with the Elders, I mentioned the practice and he admitted that he had spaced it.

Mike, as an intern, is not affected by the summer layoffs and went to work this morning at seven. He worked 55 hours last week, went to Logan on Saturday for a friend's wedding, taught in sharing time in Primary on Sunday, and then went on splits last night with the Elders. This next Saturday he is giving a workshop at the stake youth conference and teaching Primary on Sunday.

He has been busy with all his speaking engagements since returning home from his mission and has enjoyed the chance to be involved. He will leave the 27th for BYU and is getting in all the hours he can at work. He is still

undecided about getting a car and probably will just take his bike for now.

Shauntel called the other day and we talked about Randy's residency. Each month he is assigned to a new area such as surgery, radiology, psychiatrics, internal medicine, etc. Some of the rotations are much more demanding and exhausting than others. Last week he came home for only a few times during the week and then only for short periods of time. Shauntel and Camille go to the hospital each evening and spend some time with him over supper. This has been time consuming for Shauntel but she feels the need to spend a few minutes together as a family each day.

She referred to one evening last week when she arrived at the hospital and they went out into the play area to eat their supper. She and Randy sat on a big swing with Camille and she said that Randy was so tired neither of them said much. All too soon the visit was over and although there hadn't been a lot of dialogue, she felt it had been worth her time to take Camille and have the interaction. This month's rotation is especially challenging since it is in an area that he isn't very interested in and everyone is so busy that he doesn't necessarily receive the mentoring that he needs.

I shared an experience I had several years ago when Uncle Charles was going through his residency program. We were having a Richards' family reunion and one evening around the campfire when all the children were in bed, we adults each shared a few of our feelings about our lives and the challenges we faced. I had just had Paul a few months before the reunion and I was feeling so overwhelmed with life and the task of mothering nine young children. In some respects, I felt like few of my family appreciated the private battle I was waging each day as I cared for my family, agonized over finances, and met the demands of a bishop's wife.

When Charles took a turn responding to the topic at hand, he told us of the struggles he was experiencing as a young resident. His limited family time, long hours, exhaustion, and stresses of the work place touched me deeply. I realized for the first time that I wasn't the only one feeling overwhelmed and inadequate to face the daily struggle. There were tears shed as we spoke of tough times and challenges and renewed our loving support for one another.

I left the fireside that night with a greater love for my youngest brother and an enlarged understanding of him and his pursuit of his dream. Life can get very intense at times and that during those times of trial we have to hang on and rely on the Lord.

One thing that really helped me through those labor-intensive years was prayer. I like the story of the Nephites who were in captivity to the Lamanites and oppressed with the demands being put on them. They prayed for relief and although they were not delivered at that time from captivity, the scriptures recounts, "And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions. And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord." (Mosiah 24:14-15). That story inspired me to intensify my pleadings with the Lord for strength to bear the burdens placed upon me until the load was lightened.

I asked Shauntel if she was missing her work and she said that surprisingly enough, she is enjoying being at home with Camille and giving her time and energy in a supportive role to Camille and Randy. She feels helpless at times to relieve the stress on Randy but she has felt a quiet conviction that her choice to be at home is the right one for now and that at least she can "keep the home fires burning" and maintain an island of security and peace for him when he does get a break in his harried schedule. I was reminded of the instruction in The Family Proclamation and what a good guide it is for each of us in our varied situations.

August 18, 1998

[Dad] Wood Badge is over and we are looking forward to our trip to Nashville in a few days. We had thirty-three participants show up for the course. I had talked to several of the staff and ultimately had three that accepted the open door with regard to staying on staff. We had several spiritual experiences during that

selection process and felt that it was the best for those involved and their families.

The course was one of the most wonderful courses I have experienced. We were able to set up in a day and a half with two hours to spare. Although it was very intense, we were able to get everything into the six-day format that we would have done in eight days. I think it all came together so smoothly because we weren't working on Sunday.

The weather was ideal--there were only two times that we were threatened. The first time was Sunday night; it just sprinkled a tiny bit and then blew over. The other time was on Friday. It was a fierce front and the sky was black and it looked like it was raining in the valley. Three of us had kneeling prayer in the lodge and within half an hour it began to break up with blue sky showing through and then gave us one of the most beautiful nights of the week.

With thirty-three participants, we formed six squads of five or six. Sunday night before they arrived, I took my two assistants and the list of names we were expecting and we went into the woods to pray and then began assigning people to squads. There were very few that we knew but we had confirmation of the inspiration in those assignments.

Who would ever guess that Bjornn means bear in Norwegian. A fellow that we assigned to the Bobwhite squad, we later found out that he had gone to Cub Scout Trainer Wood Badge and that he had been a Bobwhite there. A fellow that we assigned to play the Kudu all week because he was one of the only ones who admitted playing the trumpet in high school, grew in confidence and ability and was not the same shy, introverted person he was when he arrived.

There were many other spiritual experiences and "coincidences" that strengthened my conviction that Lord Baden-Powell was inspired in establishing Scouting and that Wood Badge is an inspired program for training leaders and giving them a vision of what can be done in delivering a quality program to boys.

It's good to be home and focus on some of my other responsibilities. For being the Course Director, the council gave me a beautiful white statue of the "Scoutmaster" in Norman Rockwell's painting of the same name. Also, the staff gave me a beautiful silver-plated bugle and

special plaque to mount it on. I was really overwhelmed when they presented it to me. They are some of the most wonderful, giving people and I sure have grown to love them!

[Mom] As you can tell by Daddy's letter, Wood Badge went well and he felt satisfied and rewarded for all his efforts. We managed to get along here at home without him and even did the irrigating on Thursday without too much problem. It really helps to have two big boys around to assist with the yard and watering. Whenever Dad leaves for an extended period and I try to be both mother and father I am reminded of how difficult life is for single parents and I recommit to being more compassionate to those around me who shoulder this load every day.

Daddy arrived home about 10 p.m. Saturday night. Tim, Mike, and I had been involved most of the day with the stake youth conference. As stake co-chairman, Tim helped most of the morning with the set-up and preparations and then helped again when the event was over that evening. Mike was one of four presenters who did a 35-minute seminar to four groups of about 30 teen-agers each. His topic was from the Mormonads "Take Out the Trash" and dealt with keeping our minds free of bad thoughts. All the other presenters were much older and experienced and I thought it was quite a compliment to him that he was asked.

I worried about him coming up with enough material and being able to present it cleverly enough to entertain teen-agers. Several times we talked through his topic and each time he shared his ideas I became more convinced that he was very capable. As president of the Young Women I attended the conference and all the seminars. I began hearing how "awesome" Mike was from the kids in the halls as we would change classes.

He did a great job, related to the kids, and presented the information in a creative way. I think he felt pleased with how it went and the compliments he received.

Saturday night at 9:30 Tim had a song practice here for a number he was doing in church the next day and so we were helping Daddy unload the van while Tim and friends were practicing in the living room. By 10:30 the rehearsal was over

and we all went into the living room and sat and talked through the events of the week.

Sometime around 1:30 a.m. I got up to go to the bathroom and I could hear someone downstairs brushing their teeth. I wondered if Tim and Mike had been up visiting that long or if someone had fallen asleep saying their prayers and just woke up and finished getting ready for bed. Whatever the case, I thought how sweet it has been to have Mike around for all of us but especially for Tim. They have had some wonderful opportunities to bond as brothers and I'm sure they will look back on this summer as a rare opportunity to come to know and love each other more.

This week Mike continues his work at Basic but Tim is a victim of summer lay-offs. I was grateful his summer's work was over because he has had so much to do to get ready for the conference and for the beginning of school. Sunday morning he had meetings starting at 7:30 a.m., sacrament meeting at nine, singing in Pingree at 11, a meeting at five and other meeting at six with all the ward youth leaders. At 7:30 he had quartet practice. By the time he arrived home at 9:30 he was glad to see his "day of rest" come to an end.

I've spent yesterday attending to last-minute details before school and before Daddy and I leave for Nashville. Today Daddy is picking up Christine in Rexburg and bringing her home so she has a place to spend the next two weeks before classes resume at Ricks. It has worked out wonderfully for us because she will be here during our trip and be able to help with meals and SaraKay. It's been a challenge getting enough nice clothes to last for the six days we will be gone. The Sunday best clothes weren't a problem since that is the main thing I have in my wardrobe, but the casual wear has been a problem since I spend most of my time in jeans and Nashville in August isn't a good place for jeans. I really am excited for this chance to get away with Daddy, relax, and see Tennessee. Having both Mike and Christine here has given me some peace of mind regarding being gone so long. We will be back next Wednesday and Mike is planning on leaving for Provo on Thursday.

Another unknown is the arrival of John and Laurel's Emma. She is due on the 20th but the doctor suspected it would come later so we are

anxious for them and know they are excited to welcome their firstborn. When we arrive in Nashville we will call them and give them our phone number so that they can reach us. We will be staying at the Opryland Hotel Convention Center in Nashville.

We received a sweet card and pictures from David and Andrea today. It showed Laurel, Angela—and Joseph all together. What a sweet sight! It's been hard to have them so far away and not be able to share more in Joseph's first few months. The thing that really blew me away was how grown up Angela looked. Time marches on and nothing shows the passage of time quite as much as the growth of children.

I best close. Tim just left for one final swim in the canal, Mike's boss has asked him to come in and help with some projects around his yard after he gets off at 3, and SaraKay and I have been cleaning the basement and getting the wash done. Tomorrow school starts. Another summer's come and gone. Mom

August 30, 1998

[Mom] The last two weeks have been filled with a lot of joyous and exciting times for Daddy and I. On Wednesday Laurel and John welcomed Emma Kristine and the last of the '98 babies arrived safe and sound. She was 8'3" and 19" long. She has black hair and reminded us of John. Laurel got along quite well for a first baby although having a baby is never easy. We were able to visit with them when we took Mike to Provo on Thursday. It was perfect timing from our point of view although I know that last week of waiting was a long one for John and Laurel. When I phoned them last night, they said they were getting along pretty well despite some sleepless nights. Laurel's mother is coming in Wednesday and will be staying about a week. We're so grateful that mother and baby are doing well.

When Daddy went to Wood Badge I had a few evenings to read over the plans for the scouting convention. The more I read, the more excited I got. Due to the strong financial position our council is in, it was funding the trip for many of the spouses' events. Since scouting is a not-for-profit organization, individuals who contribute to scouting expect their funds to go to the boys and not to the professionals. Because of this, national conventions are rare, the last one being

30 years ago. Five years ago we went to Anaheim for a Western region convention but this one is for all scouting professionals in the U.S. and abroad.

To be able to handle the large group, the facility had to be enormous and the Opryland Convention Center filled the bill. It is a wonderful facility that consists of over 2,000 private rooms as well as restaurants, boutiques, banquet and meeting rooms, an indoor atrium, and a river that flows from one end of the facility to the other. It was quite a trick keeping straight where we were and where we were going. The older part of the hotel was built in the style of the southern plantation homes with large ornate staircases of mahogany and pillars. We were in the finest accommodations in Nashville and it was fun for a few days to enjoy the life of the "rich and famous".

We flew from Salt Lake on Thursday and arrived in Nashville about 8:30 p.m. The next day we rented cars and drove to Pigeon Forge, a town similar to Jackson Hole, but with the tourist trade fueled by Country Western music (and being the gateway to the Smoky Mountains Park). It also had some outlet stores and we spent some time there after our lunch at the Alabama Grill.

Just looking at all the memorabilia on the walls at the Grill was an education in and of itself. There were pictures of all the "greats" in country western music from the last 40 years including Elvis, Dolly Parton, Alabama, Loretta Lynn, Willy Nelson, and others. We had a fun, full day and drove back to Nashville (a three-hour drive) through some beautiful wooded country.

Part way back we stopped at a rest area. It was dark but still hot and humid and the forest all around us was alive with the sounds of insects. We could feel the moisture in the air and I understood for the first time why the forests were so dense and it was green everywhere. I'm sure that the humidity and heat can be very oppressing but that night it was so beautiful and even magical to see the fireflies and hear the sounds of the night.

Saturday morning, we toured two famous plantation mansions there in Nashville. The first was a large home with several outbuildings including slave quarters, a barn and livery, a cemetery, and acres of grounds surrounding the

home. Our guide was so articulate and explained each room and its furnishings. We were taught about the history of Nashville, cooking practices, the family that occupied the home, and the impact the Civil War had on their family and life style. Of special interest was the history of medicine and the medical practices they used that have since been shown to be ineffective.

Living in the south had its price and many people died in those years from malaria, cholera, consumption, and other diseases caused by the climate, mosquitoes, and filth. It was a wonderful history lesson and I relished the opportunity to be there and become better acquainted with the roots of the area. It became evident very early in the tour that the people of Tennessee still have some pretty strong feelings about their losses during the war and the terrible price they paid as a state and society.

The second mansion was much larger but did not have any of the original grounds and buildings with it. In its glory days prior to the war, the plantation had nearly 1,000 slaves. The people were extremely wealthy and had holdings in Louisiana and other states. The history of the mansion centered around the life of a very beautiful woman who outlived three husbands and six of her children, several who died young. She "wheeled and dealt" during the war to hang onto her fortune and managed to survive the ordeal with much of her money in European banks. It was a fascinating tale, full of intrigue and sorrow. The guide was what I would imagine a Southern gentleman to be and I regretted that we had so little time to see and hear his fascinating story.

One thing that I kept thinking about was the pioneers who were contemporaries with the people we were learning about. I know that in the early days of the church, many southerners rejected the gospel message and legion are the stories of the persecutions the missionaries suffered at the hands of the people there.

Within a few years of those events, the Saints had removed to the Rocky Mountains and the Civil War brought the South to her knees. Their whole style of life was under attack and few families escaped the sadness of lost loved ones. Many of the families were left without any descendants to carry on their family name and fortunes were lost to never be reclaimed. It was

probably the most devastating thing to ever hit our nation and by and large the saints escaped the holocaust because they followed the prophet and responded to the gospel message. Perhaps this is not a correct perception but I have thought of it so much since the experience and I've wondered about the relationship.

Saturday night we took a river boat tour. The boat was three stories high and we leisurely made our way down the Cumberland River, enjoying the chance to see more of the countryside and the Nashville skyline. Later we were entertained over a delicious meal in a beautiful dining room. Although Country has never been my favorite music, it was very entertaining and clean. The dress was modest, the jokes in good taste, and the performance G rated. I thought how much Bonnie would have loved it!

Sunday we attended church at the convention center with all the other LDS scouts and their wives. We had a testimony meeting and heard from a variety of people. I was touched by the sweetness of the meeting and the strength of the testimonies born. I guess I wondered if it would be as inspiring as our own home ward's meeting, but I left knowing that this Church is full of wonderful, strong people with fervent testimonies.

I had joked with Daddy that morning that I was deliberating which church I should attend since the day before on the tour bus I saw a large marquee on a Baptist church with the Sunday sermon listed as: "The Lewinsky Lessons". I probably wouldn't have heard anything more scathing at that church than I heard from individuals throughout our stay regarding their feelings about what's happening with President Clinton.

I was surprised by the strong feelings of the southern people and a bit taken aback by how vocal they are in regards to God. I'm sure this is what Becky dealt with on her mission and although it was tough for her to be preaching LDS doctrine to these staunch "Bible belt" people, I found their openness and fervor rather refreshing.

Sunday night was the opening banquet and we were entertained by Louise Mandrell. She sang, told jokes, played the saxophone, the fiddle, and the drums. She is an amazing musician and a

great supporter of scouting in the Middle Tennessee Council.

Monday I attended sessions with Daddy and heard Steve Covey, Zig Zigler, and that night we were entertained in three separate ballrooms with Country, Jazz, and Motown music as well as all kinds of southern foods.

Tuesday new programs were introduced and Garfield and his author, Jim Davis, were recognized for their involvement in scouting. Tuesday night was the final banquet and Wednesday morning we flew out for Salt Lake. It was such a wonderful opportunity for us to broaden our horizons and have some time with each other in a wonderful setting. By Wednesday we were ready to put the hills of Tennessee behind us and head for home. We really appreciated all that the kids and Christine did here at home to keep the house clean, the wash done up, and the meals fixed. Mike and Christine had also spent several hours getting him packed and ready to go to Provo.

When we arrived home, we received word that Laurel was being induced Thursday morning if she hadn't had the baby by then. At 10 that night we got a call from John giving us the news of Emma's arrival. We were so excited that we would be able to see her in Provo the next day.

It was hard to leave Mike in Provo. We took him grocery shopping and he carefully selected some items that would get him through the week. He took a few things from my food storage downstairs, but not enough to really make a difference. All week long I have been worrying about him having enough to eat and wishing that he could network with my refrigerator and have that as backup. Daddy reminds me that he lived for 2 years without my assistance and that he will manage fine, but he seemed a little melancholy as we left and I haven't been able to get him off my mind. He was concerned about finding a job, adding classes to the schedule he had pre-registered for, and keeping within his budget. I know that after a few days on campus he will be fine but it was still hard to feel his hesitancy at this new stage of life and the challenges ahead.

On our way home from Provo we stopped in to see Grandpa and Grandma Richards. They both seemed very contented. Grandpa was moving with ease and was alert to what was going on

and able to visit with us about our trip. It was wonderful to have the time with them and see that they are doing so well.

Saturday night while Dad and I attended a high priest social, SaraKay got hit in the eye with an apple. She was playing war with the neighbors and took one to the face. I remember Becky counseling me when SaraKay was a baby that she didn't want her to be a prima Dona. I don't think we have to worry about that with Tim around, influencing her. She was swollen and scraped up pretty badly.

Sunday morning I awoke with one eye swollen and inflamed. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to get it to settle down. This wouldn't have been much of a problem on a normal day at home, but I had several presentations to make that day, the most important one being to a ward YW Excellence night in the other stake. I spent the whole afternoon taking eye drops and various medications to get it to subside, but to no avail. I even had Daddy administer to me. Following the blessing, I put on my prettiest dress, my make-up, and headed for my speaking assignment, trying to make the best of the situation. As I stood up to give my talk, I made a few jokes about my eye and the efforts to rectify the problem and everyone laughed at me and I moved ahead with my talk. I felt well received and had some sweet comments from parents and YW. It was a nice evening despite the way I looked. I went in to the doctor; hopefully the prescription he gave me will bring relief.

The most difficult thing that we had to face upon arriving home was the news that the Fife's are getting a divorce. There has been some infidelity. I have agonized over it; both of them are very dear friends and we can see the heartache that lies ahead for them and their children. I have also thought a lot about each of you married children and of the temptations you face each day that threaten your marriages. We live in a day and age where there are so many women in the workforce and many times you are called to work closely with those of the opposite sex.

I remember the time that Steve was on a trip to Kentucky and the person he traveled with was a woman. It's so important that we all be totally committed to our marriage covenants and avoid situations that would compromise our

standards. One great safe-guard is the temple garment. It is so important to wear it and practice the modesty it requires. If we are modest in dress, we will never violate our marriage vows. I have always been grateful for the temple garment. Honoring it and the temple covenants have kept me from harm's way and saved me a lot of heartache.

It's wonderful to be home and take care of things here. SaraKay had her first piano lesson from Linnea yesterday and I sat in awe of some of the things she was taught.

[Dad] Sue has given you an excellent account of our trip to Nashville. It was a refreshing time together! I don't think we've had that much time alone together since we started having our family. I value the strength in our relationship and the deep love we have for each other. The older we get, the more beautiful she is! I enjoy the talks we have, our similar feelings and perceptions, and the peace brought by the Gospel and priesthood ordinances. I enjoy being able to talk and share feelings and ideas, and I revel in her accomplishments with her callings and on the school board; she is such an asset there.

One of the activities at the convention was "Pro Show". Displays were set up like a mini-Disneyland for each of the Scouting families: Cubs, Boy Scouts, Venturing, Learning for Life, and Finance Support. There were give-aways and interactive exhibits. For breakfast and lunch on Monday and Tuesday the professionals ate their lunches there, listened to presentations about ideas for being more effective or taking advantage of what BSA has to offer. They gave us a CD with all those 200 talks on. They also sent us home with a CD produced by the External Communications Division with new clip art, video clips of Public Service Announcements, and many other useful marketing items. The whole conference was professionally done.

It is a lot like life--there is so much to take advantage of that can improve us and the job we do; we just have to get involved and utilize resources and learn from what is offered. Many of those attending would skip some of the general sessions, or sleep in and miss the Church service or other activities and not reap the full benefit of being there.

The final speaker on Tuesday afternoon was Robert Gates, the former director of the FBI. He was also the object of one of the new Public Service Announcement videos on the theme of Strong Values, Strong Leaders—Character Counts. He certainly exemplified the integrity and leadership we expect in high places (and are not currently getting from our President and many of his associates.) He told about going with his son on a campout with his troop while he was FBI Director and the three dark vans bristling with antennae and armed security forces patrolling the area. He said nothing in our training could prepare a scoutmaster for that kind of experience. I hope to be able to get a copy of his talk and to share some of his thoughts with you.

This week is full of recruiting and getting ready for the Tiger Ear booth. The most difficult part of the job is being so dependent on others to get people signed up to fill the shifts. All of the ordering and procurement of supplies and repairing and servicing of the equipment are easy. But there are different responses to the information I send out regarding the schedule and sign-ups. Some districts follow the suggestions and timetable and get their list of volunteers in to me in advance. Others I have to nursemaid along and sometimes help with my own contacts for volunteers in their area until they finally get the job done.

It was hard to take Mike to school. It has been so nice to have him around this summer! He has grown so much from his mission and has made such a contribution with his talks and presentations and the relationships with people in the community.

September 7, 1998

[Mom] It's fair week with all the hustle and bustle of loading and unloading flour, sugar, honey butter, oil, and everything else it takes to keep 550 volunteers busy making "tiger ears". Today Becky and Chet came from Idaho Falls to help with the afternoon shift and Madison is here with SaraKay and me for a few hours. The fair board made the decision to stay open on Sundays and so everyone with a booth has to conform or lose their spot. Last night Tim, SaraKay, and I took the night shift along with a carload of priests Tim recruited during church. I wasn't sure how the Bishop would feel about that, but he was out of town yesterday and so

we'll never know. I hate it when things encroach on Sunday.

This morning Daddy was up early and gone for an extra shift they were running, but he called later and said that the grounds were pretty much empty until noon. Hopefully he will be able to break away when he gets the 3 o'clock shift going and come home for a rest. He hesitates leaving because the volunteers need constant encouragement to be precise and particular for quality control and that ends up meaning Daddy has to be right there watching the production line.

I was invited to attend the temple on Friday for the marriage ceremony of Sarah Reader, one of my Laurels. With all the pressures of the fair, Daddy was unable to pull away and attend with me, so I went alone. I decided to take in a session following the wedding and so I had several hours in the temple to enjoy the spirit there. I had to keep reminding myself that I wasn't in a hurry and to relax and take it all in. I walked around the temple and enjoyed the beautiful flowers that grace the grounds and observed the signs of coming autumn. It was such a refreshing experience and it seemed appropriate to culminate my busy summer by taking time to reflect on the wonderful blessings we've received this past year.

Last Saturday SaraKay and I went to the fair parade and then did some yard work. We had only been home a few minutes when I heard someone come in the back door and open the frig. I went out into the kitchen to see who was home and there was Tim with an enormous bump on the side of his head by his eye. He explained that he had been moving a heavy volleyball standard on the float trailer and it had rolled off the trailer and flipped up and hit him alongside the head. He was in a lot of pain and I wasn't sure what to do. We got an ice pack and applied it to his bump and then I kept checking his eyes to see if there was any indication of a concussion. His cheek bone was hurting and he could hardly open his mouth. I gave him medication and had him lie down. I decided that if the pain persisted, I would take him in for x-rays but in a couple hours he felt better and was able to move his jaw. By nightfall it was obvious that he was going to have quite a "shiner" to show off in church the next day. Today most of the swelling is gone but he has bruising up and

down the one side of his face. We were very fortunate that he wasn't more seriously injured.

Becky and Chet spent the weekend in Utah with Chet's family and also visited John, Laurel, and Emma. They said she is a darling baby and they seem to be adjusting to the rigors of parenting. They also said that Mike is doing fine (he had just returned from canoeing with some girls in his ward.) I tried to call him last night before we went in to work at the fair; I wondered if he was at the big beginning-of-the-year fireside that is held each September. I am so grateful that he had a productive summer and can afford school.

Some of you have received Jonie's e-mail announcing that on September 2nd she and Jeff were officially married! Congratulations to you and hopefully you will be able to celebrate by moving into your new home. How exciting.

[Dad] This time of year I eat, drink, and sleep Tiger Ears. Getting all the volunteers recruited to fill the shifts for eight intensive days is the biggest part of the job. All the physical work is something I can handle and do myself if necessary, but the recruiting requires help and support from all over council. The past three days we have set records for the volume we have done. Hopefully we can keep up the momentum and have a record-breaking performance!

It is times like Sunday night that I'm grateful for family and friends who will support me in the physical requirements of my job. That has happened a lot with bulk mailings, Trails, and with Tiger Ear. Sue has a School Board meeting this morning and tonight. I am always glad when I can do something to support her and partially repay all she does to support me.

September 15, 1998

[Dad] They're over! Yes, the Tiger Ear Booth and the Eastern Idaho Fair are over for another year! It was a most successful week for the Scouts as we set record highs for the first three days, a record low for the fourth day and a record high for the week as a whole, coming within \$500 of hitting \$60,000. That is 30,000 Tiger Ears! That's a lot of scones! Everything worked pretty smoothly without mechanical breakdowns or problems and with very few problems with "no shows" for the shifts.

We had a moment of excitement on the last day when a worker got caught in one of the mixers. It caught the sleeve of his shirt and began pulling him into the machine. A fellow worker with a presence of mind quickly shut off the switch. We had to cut his shirt off him with a knife and he suffered some soft tissue damage around his upper arm. But no bones were broken and it didn't even break the skin. A nurse put some Neosporin on his arm and wrapped it for him and sent him home. We also had a few minor burns from the hot oil in the cookers. Only one that raised any blisters on one of the professional staff that was cooking.

We have a tradition of going in to clean up and put things to rest for home evening on the Monday following the fair. So that is what we did last night. We cooked up the last couple of batches of "Ears" and cleaned up and put things away for another year. I sure appreciate all the work of people like Don and Carolyn Scott, Bruce Munson and his wife, Ben and Lela Hansen and others that put so much time and effort into making that project happen. They are a joy to work with and they give so freely. It would be a real chore without their help.

[Mom] My thoughts have been with Paul the last few days. He will celebrate his 20th birthday this Saturday and hopefully he has received his birthday package and letters. He never says much about the news from home and it has made me wonder if he is receiving the mail. Thursday will be his "hump" day. It doesn't seem possible that next year at this time he will be at Ricks with Tim.

Mike is still job hunting and is scheduled for a presentation at the MTC on Thursday. He missed the first hiring's done before September because he thought the job with Dave Hammond would come through and didn't get his application in soon enough, but now with the uncertainty there he has gone ahead and applied at the MTC. He is grateful that he hasn't had a car payment to make along with other expenses. He was called to be the ward executive secretary.

Daddy was just released from a Sunday School teaching job and made the Cub Master. He is also teaching in the High Priest Quorum and has really enjoyed that calling. If I remember right, Andrea is in a YW presidency, Bonnie is the Primary president, Shauntel a YW president,

Lindsay an executive secretary, Steph is ward music chairman, Randy is a scout leader, Steve in the Sunday School presidency, Becky teaches Sunday School, and Dave and Chet are Elders Quorum presidents. Laurel was just made a counselor in the Relief Society and John is Deacons quorum advisor. Sounds like we could just about man a ward ourselves.

I've had an interesting week. On Monday Tim came home and said that the kids in Chambers were planning a tour to New York to attend a Broadway musical. I talked over with him the school policy on tours and why I supported it wholeheartedly.

The next day when the subject was brought up again in class, Tim commented that I had talked through the policy with him and that the school board would never permit the Chambers to go that far on any tour. Mr. Grayson overheard Tim and invited him to give the students the reasoning behind the policy. Well, to make a long story short, the students decided to attend the board meeting and present their case. Mr. Grayson called me that afternoon and told me that the students would be coming and asked if I thought he should attend, too. I responded that if he had a cause, he should be there to defend it. I knew that they were not on the printed agenda and I told him that I would ask the superintendent to put them on during patron forum.

Tuesday night at board meeting we had in attendance about 75 people including 15 members of the class, four parents, and Mr. and Mrs. Grayson, choir and drama directors. Prior to the meeting I informed Elzo that we would have a group coming and he was not happy about it. He said that the principal should have handled it and that we shouldn't have to revisit the school policy about travel every time a group decides to challenge it.

Despite his objections, we felt it wise to give the students and their parents a chance to voice their objections to the existing policy. The ensuing discussion occupied nearly an hour. Having had students in Chambers for the last 17 years, I was the board member with the best memory of past years and other attempts of that particular class to get permission to go on extended trips and tours. I recounted the times that cruises to the Caribbean, the Bahamas,

Disneyland, and even Russia had been discussed and turned down.

Eventually, after much emotional and heated debate, the board voted to stick to existing policy. I felt good about our decision but I realized the students were disappointed and hoped that they wouldn't say anything to Tim the following day in class. Not so. When Mr. Grayson invited Emily, the Chambers president, to discuss with the group the next day in class how the board meeting had gone, she expressed her frustration with our decision and then proceeded to blame me for the vote. Others chimed in and everyone was having a great time (except, of course, Tim, who was offended that the kids would criticize me.)

Tim was invited to defend the board's policy in front of the class but couldn't really get out much because several of the kids were yelling things at him. Finally, Mr. Grayson called the class to order and put an end to the whole thing but not before Tim felt hurt and defensive. I didn't know any of this had gone on until noon when Tim came home en route to the orthodontist. He needed to talk it through and when he told me what had happened my first thought was to march over to the high school and give Mr. Grayson a piece of my mind regarding how unprofessional and immature his actions were. I also thought about writing a blistering letter to Emily and the members of Chambers class, thanking them for the kindness they had shown Tim in their attack that day.

But, as Tim and I continued to talk about it we decided that the best defense was to not respond and just let tempers cool down. Needless to say, I had an unsettled afternoon and kept thinking through the decision we had made and the reasons behind it. How I wished that someone, especially a parent of one of the class members, would call and say, "Thanks for your decision", but no one did and it left me with a kind of nagging feeling that maybe our decision didn't reflect the feelings of other parents or that "times had changed", as Mr. Grayson, had said to me, and people were in favor of this kind of activity.

I kept thinking about Truman's statement, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen" and I realized that this was very much a part of my school board experience and that I needed to be more thick-skinned. I just felt badly that

Tim had been caught in the middle and that was certainly not fair to him. I determined that I would move ahead with my continuing support of Mr. Grayson and his choir and not let this incident come between us. I have long respected him and many of the members of Chambers are among my favorite young people and I certainly didn't want this to be an issue. I think Tim has felt okay about it, too, and we are both glad that we let it rest and didn't retaliate.

September 22, 1998

[Mom] Janet Jenks and I are back to our usual routine of walking each day for an hour and although I'm committed mentally, my body is still objecting and my legs are like jelly after an hour of brisk walking. We enjoy the chance to visit as we exercise and since we work in the Young Women's together, we usually have plenty of things to visit about.

Although harvest won't officially start until Thursday, tonight is Tim's first shift at Basic American and he will be working four 12-hour shifts, 11 p.m. to 11 a.m. this week. The personnel manager assured him that he will get his 48-hour weeks during the harvest break and he welcomes the opportunity to add to his college and mission fund.

The other day in Kesler's I asked Candice Clegg how Micah (Paul's friend) was doing and she said that he would be home from his mission in nine months. She went on to say that she was in the process of lining up housing for him and getting his paper work in to Ricks for fall of 99. I realized that I should be doing the same thing for Paul and all at once the reality of next year hit me; Tim and Paul together at Ricks less than a year from now! It doesn't seem possible. Tim signed up for his second testing on the ACT this week so I guess the process is moving ahead whether I am feeling ready or not.

Mike called last night with the good news that he has a job at the MTC teaching the advanced Spanish missionaries. He has some very irregular hours with a large block of his work week (8 hours) coming on Monday afternoon and evening. He felt really grateful and pleased with the way things have worked out and can even car pool on Monday with his roommate who shares the same schedule.

Yesterday Becky and Madison spent the day helping me sponge paint the big bathroom upstairs. I have been collecting a few knick-knacks for the walls and have been anxious to dress it up a little. We worked for three hours and thoroughly enjoyed the time. Madison is such a pleasant and happy little girl and a joy to have around.

We will be leaving Friday for Provo to spend the weekend with John and Laurel. Daddy has an endowment seminar in Ogden on Saturday so we are going to leave Friday morning, drive to Salt Lake and spend some time with Grandpa and Grandma Richards, and then proceed on to Provo to spend Friday night with John and Laurel. Saturday morning Daddy will drive back to Ogden and attend his seminar while I help Laurel get ready for their special event on Sunday. They have invited extended family as well as friends to join them for her blessing and for a dinner following the meeting. I have been excited to see Emma since the last time we were there was just 12 hours after she was born. I know how much newborns change from day to day.

We are enjoying this time of year when the harvest is gathered in and BYU is playing football. The days have started to be a little nippy in the mornings and are growing shorter and I am reminded of the scripture that laments, "in an hour when ye think not the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved." (D&C 45:2) Keep living the gospel. Life is short and each day a sacred trust.

September 28, 1998

[Mom] It's a beautiful fall day outside and spud harvest is in full swing. We feel so removed from it all this year with Tim working at Basic American instead of working for Gary. Harvest officially started last Wednesday so Tim put in a 48-hour week and even did a couple of lawns over the weekend. This week he has several day shifts which certainly make life more bearable. It seems strange to not have at least one child working in the fields this year. I feel a bit nostalgic about past years and memories of long hours, late nights, harvest clothes, and break-downs.

As we returned from Salt Lake last night and drove past the Fort Hall exit, I smelled the newly

worked ground and commented that Harvest was in the air. "I smell dirt," Dad said, rather unemotionally, trying to bring me back to reality and the relief of not having the pressures of harvest to deal with anymore.

But, despite his seeming objectivity towards this annual tradition, we counted the fields adjoining the interstate where the spuds were done and tried to estimate the percentage of the crop still in the ground and looked with admiration at the fields newly harvested with the soil thoroughly worked over and ready for next year's crop.

Daddy's right, of course, that it is wonderful to not have the pressures of getting out the crop and all the attendant worries and expenses, but surely there is merit in remembering the good times, the bad times, the camaraderie among the diverse crew members, and the feeling of relief and accomplishment when "all is safely gathered in".

I've wondered if Grandpa Larsen's thoughts this time of year don't turn to the farm and the lifetime of memories there for him and his family. I know this is a critical year for Gary and he would appreciate all our faith and prayers in his behalf as they complete their year.

We spent some time Friday with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. They seemed so relaxed and happy. Grandpa has reacted positively to his new medication and he is able to visit and understand what is going on and contribute to the conversation. What a delight to sit and visit with them about world affairs (no pun intended), the extended family, our family, and their neighbors and ward activities.

I count it a great blessing that they are healthy and able to have a good quality of life. I am also grateful to Kathy for her constant watch care.

Being with John and Laurel was a treat for us. Of course, we spent a lot of time oohing and ahing over little Emma. Laurel and I spent Saturday preparing for the dinner following the blessing. Daddy drove to Ogden and attended his seminars there and then we had a picnic with everyone (Mike included) that evening.

The women's broadcast was on KBYU and we were able to sit in the comfort of their living room and share that wonderful session with Dad and John. I am forever in awe and grateful for the magnificent leadership we enjoy in this

church and for the confirmation each conference that I know they are caring and inspired to lead us.

It was fun to have Steve and Rachel and Nathan join us for the blessing Sunday. I am always amazed at how much older they seem each time we get together. As we left John and Laurel's to return home, Steve was also leaving and he and Rachel and Nathan walked us to the car to say good-bye and then they walked hand-in-hand down the street to their own car. It was such a sweet sight to see the three of them together, all in their Sunday best clothes, carefully and under their dad's watchful care crossing the street and then continuing on to their car. I couldn't help think of all the young fathers in our family and of the wonderful blessing they are in the lives of their little ones.

President Hinckley mentioned the role of a righteous father in the family and stressed that many of our ills in society today would be eradicated if there was a righteous man at the head of every family. It gave me a lot of satisfaction to contemplate the benefits in my own life from the influence of two worthy and loving fathers and then to extend that to the gratitude I feel for Dad and the wonderful influence he has been in each of your lives. I'm grateful for each of you sons and sons-in-law and for your efforts to be righteous and involved in the lives of your children. You will never regret the time you spend building relationships!

Another added bonus of going to Provo was that we got to spend some time with Mike and meet a couple of the girls he has been dating. We attended his sacrament meeting Sunday morning and all of the bishopric came up to introduce themselves and sing Mike's praises. His job at the MTC is working out well and will give a much-needed boost to his finances. He observed a class at the MTC and saw how bored many of the missionaries were with the way the class was being taught. He wanted to jump up and put life into the presentation but knew that it wasn't his place to do so ... yet. He is excited for the opportunity to teach. The girls he has been dating certainly got our nod and we had only two words for him: "Carry On".

Saturday night SaraKay asked why the "Y" wasn't lit up like it usually is. I guess usually she is there for graduation or homecoming and has seen it lit up. Daddy commented that they must

not have known we were coming or they would have lit it up for us again.

In reality, it is us who brighten up each time we go to BYU. It is a place of sweet and poignant memories for Daddy and me and always will be.

Last year for Christmas Steph and Linds gave Daddy a book about Lewis and Clark. I had seen a documentary on it a few weeks before and had been so impressed with the author's research. When we took our trip to Tennessee, I read most of it and it was fascinating. Until reading the account I never completely appreciated what a marvelous boon this Corp of Discovery was to the United States and how much the Lord guided this small group of adventurers. Truly the hand of the Lord assisted them in arriving safely to the Pacific Coast with most of their records and journals intact. Every step of the way things were prepared that insured their safety. Without the knowledge they acquired, the movement of the Saints to the Great Basin would have been nearly impossible and the establishment of the Kingdom in the Rocky Mountains would have been more difficult.

It has really opened my eyes to how the Lord works through a variety of people to accomplish His purposes and that things are in preparation now for the work that lies ahead of us in preparing for the Second Coming. It is reassuring and thrilling to contemplate that the Lord has a hand in the affairs of men and that all his purposes will be fulfilled. And to think we can play a role in this wonderful work!

[Dad] My work lately has revolved around paying bills for Wood Badge and Tiger Ear. At the same time, I have been getting things moving again for the Investment Committee and my Planned Giving Committee. I have been recruiting some new committee members and getting some new life into what we are doing.

Mom commented on last weekend. It has become more and more rewarding for me to be involved in the lives of my kids and grandkids. I guess I am at the stage in life when those things become satisfying and fulfilling. I have always enjoyed my family and given them priority in my time sharing. I have always had a great sense of pride and joy in each of you and your accomplishments. But there is something special about being "Grandpa".

It was great to be able to watch the Relief Society broadcast and share in the wonderful messages of the presidency and President Hinckley. I was impressed with the message of Sister Dew and the powerful testimony she bore of a living prophet—she probably knows more about him than anyone outside his family. In view of all the publicity regarding President Clinton and his peccadilloes, it is refreshing to listen to and emulate a man of integrity, whose life is an open book, who is congruent with his private and public lives and expressions.

We watched a taped rerun of his interview on Larry King Live and were impressed again with the courage of a modern-day prophet to go on the firing line—live on public TV to declare to the world our beliefs and encourage inquiry. What a great force he is in building the kingdom in preparation for the Second Coming!

Just over a week ago, I had the opportunity to go on splits with the missionaries. I couldn't help thinking of my mission and Paul and our other missionaries and the differences and the similarities in experiences. After one of the appointments fell through and we tried unsuccessfully to meet with several other families that Elder Penna had on his contact list, he asked me for anyone I thought we could meet with. I suggested our neighbors, the Young's, and took the lead in getting us in to visit with them and show them a video. Afterward, they were gracious but declined any further appointments to learn more about the Church. Shelly said that they were both raised in the Church but had taken a different path and felt that they were happy with the decisions they had made. I was glad that we had gone there and been able to talk with them but sad that they were so fixed in their ways. I know the Gospel would bring so much joy into their lives.

October 5, 1998

[Mom] Steph and Linds and family have been busy preparing a musical number for the Primary Sacrament Meeting program. Contrary to Steph's concern that some in the family might be too timid to participate, the kids have been excited and especially Josh who has turned out to be quite a performer. He has been so eager that they are letting him sing one verse all by himself and he has quickly become the "star" of the show. Steph says they're now facing a different challenge: getting him to relinquish the

microphone so that the other siblings can share in the spotlight!

This past week Linds installed a satellite dish and they were able to watch conference in the comfort of their own family room. Steph said it made getting everyone drinks so much easier than when they watched it at the stake center. (Sounds like they were hosting "happy hour.")

Shauntel and Randy are anticipating their court date on October 21st. Everything seems to be moving ahead with no glitches. The challenge is going to be finding time to get to the temple to have Camille sealed to them. With the heavy time commitments Randy has at the hospital, it is nearly impossible for him to get days off work and so they are not sure how it is all going to work out. There is one supervisor who has been sympathetic to Randy's cause and is going to try to help him arrange things so that they can leave for a day, but as of yet there is no set date for the sealing. Shauntel drove to Nauvoo last Friday and did some research in the Family History Center there. She had called previously and asked if I could locate any relatives who were in Nauvoo prior to the exodus to Utah. I was able to give her several names and she spent some time going over the Center's records and made copies of some information.

Jonie and Jeff's home is going to be moved onto their property this week. Following that they will have a couple more weeks of waiting for all the utilities to be hooked up but Jonie said it is getting close and she has been figuring out where she will put things in the kitchen cupboards and the bedrooms. It is certainly going to be a boon to them to have more space and such nice accommodations.

She is enjoying her work at the medical facility and has been recommended for another job in-house that would provide her with better benefits and full-time status.

Steve is taking a reprieve for a couple months from his traveling and will be working the Help Lines at his job. He has been going to work at six each morning to service his existing clients and then mans the Help desk for the balance of the day. He is looking forward to a little more settled routine.

David and Andrea are busy and involved with church responsibilities, job, and family. Andrea participates in a Joy School with some other

young mothers and hosts the play group each week. She has begun teaching Laurel piano and has enjoyed utilizing some of the tips she has received from the book, "Teaching Children Responsibility". I could hear Joseph cooing while we were visiting and it made me anxious for next summer when they will be coming for the August reunion.

Becky and Chet hosted Chet's family over the weekend and we dropped by to visit them last night on our way home from a viewing in Rigby. While we were there Chet received a phone call requesting his help on the church potato farm (1900 acres) tonight. This call prompted a conversation about his experiences the previous week working in the spud cellar on the belt picking clods. It was amusing hearing him describe the process in layman terms and we laughed at his descriptions of the piler, the sand machine, and conveyor belts.

When he mentioned one fellow on the crew who seemed like a "twit" we all agreed that every harvest crew has to have at least one "twit" and probably by the time the two weeks of intense, back breaking work is over, almost everyone on the crew feels like one. When Chet agreed to move to Idaho, I'm sure he had no idea he would eventually end up working in a spud harvest but he just wouldn't be able to say he has had the "Idaho experience" unless he had shared in that annual event. He was a good sport to take all our teasing.

John and Laurel were pleased to learn that John received a scholarship from the Engineering department to help them out with expenses this year. His class load has been enjoyable and not quite as intense as last year and it has made life more bearable. Laurel is planning a trip home to visit with her family the first week in November and is anxious to show off Emma to friends and family in Ohio.

He and Mike attended the Priesthood session together Saturday evening. Mike is busy with school and work and doing a lot of dating; no one girl seems to be monopolizing his thoughts and time yet. I called him last night about 10:30 and it sounded like a party was going on. I thought I could hear the sounds of a video game, a CD player, the TV, 50-100 male and female voices, the doorbell, and even some electrical appliances in the background as we were visiting. He said they were thinking about

adding two roommates at semester to lower their monthly rent per person and I tried to envision adding two more bodies to that madness and was glad I was living a four-hour drive away in an obscure and quiet corner of Idaho.

Tim has only two more days at Basic and he will be back in school. He has really capitalized on this harvest and worked 56 hours last week alone. He has had another money-making project going on that has added to the insanity around here this past week.

Last week he saw a flier advertising free supplies from Office Max. His strategy was to buy the supplies, submit the information to receive a full cost rebate, and have all the items to resale for a profit. As with most of his schemes, Dad and I were a bit skeptical but he had a couple days off so we gave our okay to the project.

We went on a shopping spree at Office Max, filling three enormous shopping carts with rebate items. Tim brought them home, filled out rebate slips, returned those items that weren't on rebate, and after a mere 30 hours of paper work, travel time, sorting and figuring, and an investment of over \$800.00, he now has a display in the basement of office supplies ready for selling. He has printed up a flier he is going to distribute at school advertising the items and price and then hopes to realize a tidy profit from the venture.

I hope the county doesn't find out and fine us for having a business in an area zoned residential. Maybe there won't be so many customers that it will be noticeable and we'll be able to sell everything without getting into trouble. Who knows! Anyway, Steve and David will be glad to know that Tim has taken their idea about starting a store in the basement (remember Rockford?) to new heights. I hope he doesn't get into trouble at school for taking advantage of the other students. I know the neighbors have had enough experience with Tim and his "sales" that the mothers are all pretty cautious about having their young children come visit. [That may have its advantages.]

Isn't it amazing how the Lord meets our needs? Just a few weeks ago Daddy and I were lying in bed one night talking about SaraKay and how much she wanted a pet. We couldn't face going

through the puppy scene again with all the travails of messes in the garage, chewed up shoes and boots, and garbage strewn everywhere. We also knew that unless the dog was locked up it would start roaming with the other dogs in the neighborhood and that could lead to all kinds of problems as in times past. Each time we thought about getting a dog, we just couldn't face it!

Last week Tim invited Janalee Thompson to Homecoming and one night at 10:30 the doorbell rang and upon answering it we discovered a box with a brown bunny in it on our doorstep. Affixed to the box was a note stating, "I would be "hoppy" to go to the dance with you!" Included in the box were rabbit pellets and a note giving instructions for its care. Well, to make a long story short, the bunny was so tame and cute and easy to care for that we now have a rabbit hutch in the back yard and an adorable pet for SaraKay. She plays with it just like a kitty and it hops around in its pen eating grass and pellets.

Daddy cleverly devised a pen that we set on the lawn and so the rabbit eats the lawn through the wire and we supplement his diet with pellets. No, it has not replaced our riding mower, but it has filled the pet void and seemed to have answered our need for now. We have even put in our order for one more to keep FuFu company in the cold winter months.

I guess the only news left to mention is that Daddy has accepted the challenge of being camp director at the Island Park scout camp next summer and so we will be spending seven weeks in a small cabin at Island Park next June and July overseeing several hundred scouts. We were asked about this assignment several weeks ago and knew it was a possibility but decided not to mention it until it was official. Of course, Daddy has mixed emotions about it but I think as he puts his heart into it he will thoroughly enjoy the chance to provide a quality camp experience for scouts throughout Idaho. It has already got him thinking and planning and coming up with ideas for improvement on previous years. I will probably hire on as his business manager and hopefully SaraKay can find a spot to be of assistance, too. We'll be returning the Saturday before the reunion.

[Dad] I have mixed emotions about the camp director assignment, but more positive than

negative. Last week I went with Robert and Kim and last year's director for a post-camp inspection at Island Park. I was amazed at all the work I could see needs to be done as far as clean-up, repairing, painting, and so on. One of the things I would really like to see done is a new shower facility built there before next year. The major obstacle is over \$100,000 to finance the project. Any ideas?

During the Saturday session of conference, I was working on the rabbit hutch on the back patio and thoroughly enjoyed the messages of the brethren while I worked. It was also fun to transform a big storage box into a nice tight home for the rabbit and to take pride in that project. It is wonderful what you can do with the proper tools and a little know-how.

That night we went to the priesthood session of conference. Tim went for the first 45 minutes and then he left to go to work from 7 to 7. What beautiful messages and I kept up my usual tradition of coming home and sharing with Sue my notes of all the talks and then have some ice cream. I would have rather shared the experience with some sons or sons-in-law but I know each of you were enjoying the session in your own way. I was touched as I watched many father and sons come into our stake center together. Brother Mickelson (Barbara Hansen's father) was sitting with his son and then in came Dave Hansen and his big strapping sons and joined their grandfather—I thought what a wonderful thing to share with sons and grandsons together! Some of my most cherished memories relate to such occasions with my father and sons.

October 13, 1998

[Mom] We awoke this morning to a cold and frosty day. The frost was so heavy that SaraKay and I both thought that there was snow on the ground but upon further inspection, (much to her disappointment and my delight) we found that it was just a heavy frost. Truly fall is in the air and the trees are turning a beautiful orange and yellow. The kids have returned to school although the spud harvest isn't quite complete.

Tim got back to school on schedule. He is into the throes of Homecoming this week and has a horrendous week ahead with preparations for that.

Last week we bought a pick-up and also found a car for Mike. We asked Ron Mangum several months ago to keep us in mind when he attended the weekly auctions and if he spotted a good deal to let us know. He called last Tuesday and he had bid on an extended cab, GMC pickup and got the bid. To make a long story short, we liked what he got and so now we own a shiny, new, deep blue pickup that has plenty of head and leg room and lets Daddy ride in comfort. Ron also sold us a little blue Hyundai for Mike that we delivered to him Friday when we made the trip to Provo.

Chet was gone on a business trip and so Becky and Madison offered to ride along with me to keep me company in the Hyundai. Becky and I left about 10:00 Friday morning and arrived in Provo in time to visit a friend of Becky's from her Battle Creek Academy days and then continued on to introduce Mike to his car, talk through some money matters, deliver some potatoes, and then go to John and Laurels. Laurel had invited us for dinner prior to Homecoming Spectacular and Mike brought a date along for the evening.

Becky's in-laws picked her up and took her back with them to West Jordan for the evening and then brought her to meet us the next morning at the Kimball (Grandpa and Grandma's condo share) and we came home. It was a short getaway but we felt grateful that we helped resolve Mike's car situation. Hopefully it will run well for him. He is grateful that he has a steady job and can afford to do this.

[Dad] Sue left last night to drive to Steve and Bonnie's to help for the next couple of days. Bonnie is going in for surgery to remove her gall bladder. With her pregnancy with Christine she developed some problems related to her gall bladder and the doctor said she would need to have it removed sometime after her delivery. I am grateful that we are in a position to help. Her mother is going to be there Thursday and Friday.

Saturday after we arrived home, I cut wood and cleaned up around the wood box area outside. I must have strained some muscles because Sunday morning I leaned over to put a couple things in the waste basket under the sink in our bathroom and felt a snap in my back. I could hardly move because of the pain. It has been a long time since I have had that problem. With some flexural and Ibuprofen, I was able to get

through the day and teach my lesson to the High Priests. I had a Cub Scout committee meeting, then we went to Choir practice, and Tim and I did our home teaching. We have two families--the Crites and a new family in the ward, the Wolfes.

Still drugged up, I was able to make it through Monday and am feeling pretty good now without the flexural.

SaraKay is doing her piano this morning while I am typing this letter. She has been painting a "paint by number" picture with two dogs on it. She worked on it last night and is almost finished. Last Friday it was a special treat for me to be able to attend the assembly at Riverside where she was honored as a Super Student and then to join her for school lunch. After that I headed South and joined Sue for the festivities in Provo.

Yesterday Sue and I cut corn stalks at the neighbors and loaded up a pickup load for me to take to Jensen's Grove. Last night was a Republican rally and "hoe-down."

October 20, 1998

[Mom] I spent a couple days last week with Steve and Bonnie, helping them with the children while Bonnie had surgery to remove her gall bladder. She had the surgery Tuesday and was able to come home late that night although she was pretty sore.

Wednesday she directed traffic from the couch and I tried to fill in as mother. Christine had a hard time understanding why mama couldn't hold her but before the day was over, she was doing much better. I left Wednesday evening and Bonnie's mother arrived Thursday to help for a couple days until the weekend. I called last night and Bonnie said she is feeling stronger every day and hopefully will be up to speed by week's end. Our prayers are with her.

The court date for Camille's adoption is set for this Wednesday, October 21st. Shauntel said that Randy has permission to take a week off in December and they are going to fly to Salt Lake and have Camille sealed to them in the Idaho Falls Temple on a Saturday. The date for the temple ordinance has not been set yet but it will be forthcoming. They are assuming a Saturday morning would work best for everyone but they are still in the process of working out the details.

Our thoughts and prayers will be with them on Wednesday as they finalize Camille's adoption.

Let me reaffirm the plans for Thanksgiving weekend. We will be playing volleyball Thursday morning from 9-11 at the stake center followed by basketball until noon if anyone is interested. As far as I know Becky and Chet and a Korean Ricks College student, John and Laurel and Mike will be coming. I have invited Christine to join us but her plans are not set yet. The local missionaries have been invited and we are on standby with them.

I've received a disk from John and Laurel which has Grandma Gooch's complete life history on it. They have been working on it for nearly a year, scanning it into their computer so that it could be prepared for printing and have done a great deal of the work to correct errors in spelling and other things. I appreciate their efforts on that project.

SaraKay and I picked about 4 bushels of apples last Friday at Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's and I have been making apple pie filling and drying apples just as quickly as my dryer will handle it. This week I am taking some to Gary and Linda and Trina and then doing some applesauce. Whenever I think on the abundance we enjoy the term "good earth" comes to mind and I feel to rejoice over the Lord's goodness to us.

I have mentioned to several of you that Bishop Godfrey is very ill with cancer of the intestines. This is a reoccurrence of the cancer he had 10 years ago. He is taking both Chemo and radiation treatments and is facing surgery. He and his family are such dear friends and our hearts ache for them at this time of trial.

[Dad] Last weekend I overdid it again and am laid up with a sore back. Saturday I puttered around with the saw and got it running (as well as cleaning and organizing some of my tools). In the afternoon I tried to get all the poles and uncut wood around the wood box cut up and ended up re-aggravating my sore back from the previous week--too much too soon. I've been to the doctor and have another prescription of cyclobenzaprine and am able to stand up straight again.

I wanted to share with you some thoughts from a fellow named Michael Medved, a film critic and talk radio host. In this talk he was

discussing how the world today is assaulting the innocence of youth and in our attempts to prepare them for a harsh and dangerous future we are frightening and corrupting our young. He talked about three things that are critical to preparing our children for the future—1) Security, 2) Optimism, and 3) Capturing a sense of wonder.

With regard to security, the main thing he discussed was the importance of traditions and rituals. "Family rituals can play such an important and constructive role in children's lives. These traditions may include Sunday outings, Monday night parents-and-kids basketball games, or just the simple but crucial habit of tucking in the youngsters and saying prayers at bedtime. Each family develops its own unique and sometimes quirky ways of observing birthdays, meals, and other occasions.

Older rituals, rooted in religious faith, involve more timeless, universal elements, providing children with a solid sense of their place in the family and in the world Children appreciate the power of ritual. That is one of many reasons that seemingly small gestures, such as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in the morning or thanking God before a meal, can provide significant benefits. Children deserve to know what to expect from life, and they also deserve to know what is expected of them. In other words, they need to feel a sense of predictability when it comes to the consequences of their actions. Even if those consequences involve punishment or other unpleasantness, consistency and reliability contribute to a belief in an ordered world that makes sense ... "

On optimism he talks about children seeming to be "hard-wired for optimism". He talks about the importance of children having a sense of "It's a great world." If a feeling of amazement and joy at this vast and dazzling universe escapes our offspring in childhood, it will likely be denied to them for a lifetime. What is the best way to counteract the whining self-pity that plays such a prominent role in politically correct thinking and pop culture? The true antidote to pessimism isn't some forced Pollyanna optimism—it is gratitude, expressed fervently and frequently. Anyone fortunate enough to be born in the United States, this blessed island of sanity and decency in the midst of the dark, bloody, turbulent ocean of historic human

misery, should make every day Thanksgiving Day and the Fourth of July. We need to acknowledge our appreciation for our country, for its founders and heroes, and for our own parents and grandparents. Above all, however, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Almighty, who has showered us with gifts and opportunities of an altogether unprecedented nature. The refusal to recognize that debt sours our present and threatens our future. We all know what happens in our own lives if a parent, a spouse, or a business associate deserves our appreciation but some spirit of stubbornness or pride prevents us from expressing it. The resulting sense of ingratitude can become an acid that corrodes our very soul. At the moment, public and private ingratitude in America has become an acid that is corroding the soul of our society."

October 26, 1998

[Mom] Last Wednesday morning Shauntel called to let us know that she, Randy, and Camille had had their "day in court" and that all had gone as planned. Having never experienced the adoption process myself, it has been informative as well as a poignant experience to share in the entire drama from application to finalizing the adoption in court.

Shauntel described how they and their attorney were scheduled to appear before the judge on Wednesday morning. The judge handling their case was quite elderly and seemed very austere and impersonal. In fact, she said the whole court room scenario was intimidating.

They sat quietly as the judge studied over their resume's and then asked a few questions, including if they had come to love Camille in the time that she had been with them in their home. When the judge finished questioning them, he had the court recorder add to the court record a few observations that he made regarding Shauntel and Randy. His final comments concerned Camille, that she appeared to be a beautiful and cheerful child.

Following these formally given statements, he pounded his gavel and it was over. It was then that a very sweet and unexpected thing occurred. The judge came around the bench, put out his arms to Camille, and requested that he have a chance to hold and get acquainted with her. All at once he was no longer the judge

but a sweet and personable grandfather, sharing with them in their joy on that momentous occasion. After a moment's hesitation, Camille went to him and he held her, talked to her, and made them all feel right at home. It was an unexpected show of love and concern that seemed to add a touch of compassion and humanness to the situation in contrast to the coolness they had felt in the proceedings just a few minutes before. I thought how thoughtful it was of the judge with his busy schedule to show them the kindness and send them on their way with his blessing.

I have probably mentioned to some of you about a story that was told in sacrament meeting several years ago by Dan Crites. He and his wife Jennifer built a home across from Fife's and they have become an important part of our ward family because of their many talents and commitment to service. Dan is a convert and both of his parents died several years ago so he doesn't have any family in the church.

The story he told was about his father who was an officer in the military during the Second World War. Part way through the war Dan's father was assigned to be the chief officer over a prisoner-of-war camp in the Philippines. It was an assignment that he certainly wouldn't have requested but that he assumed for a couple of years. He was serving in that position when the war ended and the hundreds of prisoners under his charge were released.

At that time the members of the camp drafted a letter and all of them signed it and presented it to him. Dan showed us in sacrament meeting the actual letter that he had kept for many years as a remembrance of his father's goodness. In the letter, the prisoners expressed gratitude to him for his many kindness and mercy towards them and for the humane treatment they had received when so many in other camps were denied so much. The story was a testimony to the fact that whatever situation we are called to be in, we can find ways to show kindness and concern for those around us and ultimately make a difference for good.

I need to run. I've got parent-teacher conferences at 4, violin at 5, interviews at 6, and our Halloween skating party at 6:30. Supper time is going to be pretty harried tonight. Yesterday I picked up SaraKay and her friend Angela and took them both for SaraKay's piano

lesson so that they could go through their festival duet. It was so fun to sit and watch Linnea work with the two of them seated on the piano bench in front of her baby grand piano, giving them suggestions and encouraging them towards the perfection she expected.

At one point she corrected SaraKay's fingering on one chord because she was using 1-3-5 fingers instead of 1-3-4. She said to SaraKay, "Make that fourth finger do his own work. Don't let 3 always do his work for him. He is like a little brother who always hides when it's time to do the work!" SaraKay and Angela looked at each other and started to giggle; they could identify with what she was trying to teach them. I am always touched when I see how eager children are to learn. It is a privilege to raise our children and see that they receive opportunities to learn, to have their goodness and value confirmed, and be nurtured in truth and love. It is a source of joy to realize that my grandchildren are receiving that kind of training in your homes. What a blessing that will have eternal consequences for us all. Love, Mom

[Dad] Sometimes I wonder if this weekly letter is worth the effort—it seems like we get so little feedback and participation from the rest of the family. Then I read something like the account above of the "day in court" and realize, if just for our own record and history it is worth several times over, the effort put into it.

Last week, I had my first pack meeting as Cub master and it turned out to be a success. SaraKay especially enjoyed it and wanted to know if she could come to all my pack meetings with me. A couple of the things we did that made the meeting were face-painting and making stamps from small blocks of wood and cutting out Naugahyde in the shapes you wanted and gluing them on the wood. The kids had a real ball with those activities.

Last Friday night I had been recruited by a friend of mine, Lamont Gibson, to come to the South Caribou Varsity Scout Rendezvous. He wanted me to participate on an "Honor Trail" presentation and also to be the bugler. I was in great form and "Taps", "Reveille", and "To The Colors" at the flag raising never sounded better.

There were several people there from my Wood Badge course this summer and they all commented on how much they enjoyed the

bugling and especially at night after I would play "Taps", I would usually follow it up with "Come, Come Ye Saints" or something and they especially enjoyed that. It is a bit of a surprise to me how much satisfaction I receive from being able to touch people's lives with my trumpet—it is very rewarding!

One of the things I talked about last week was the article by Michael Medved about three indispensable elements in exalting childhood innocence—security, optimism, and a sense of wonder. I ran out of time to share thoughts about a sense of wonder—particularly relating to the role of television in our lives and I wanted to share a couple of quotes with you about that.

".... we can best protect a sense of wonder in our kids by nurturing a sense of wonder in ourselves. Pausing to rejoice in everyday delights—especially in the company of those we love most—can promulgate the important awareness that life is always precious, always new.

"And it is, without question, much too precious to waste so much of it on TV. When it comes to defending childhood innocence, we have inexplicably invited the principal enemy and potential destroyer into our own living rooms. By the age of six, the average American child has spent more hours watching the tube than he will spend speaking to his father in his lifetime. This is madness and, in a very real sense, child abuse. And the old parental excuse, "My kids only watch the quality programs," does not carry any weight at all. The underlying problem with television and kids isn't quality. It is quantity."

"Regardless of programming content, our hurried, over-scheduled kids still need to get up off the couch, join softball games with neighbors, read books for fun, joke with friends, interact with family, or just play by themselves in the yard to stretch their imagination. Every family can benefit by turning off, or turning down, the TV set, and eliminating, or at least reducing, the impact of this dominating influence. If you worry that a decision to get rid of the boob tube would make your child stand out from some of his peers, please remember: One of the greatest gifts that parents can give their offspring is the courage to be different."

Yes, the time we have to influence the children that Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care

is altogether too brief. We need to capitalize on it and make the most of the time we have.

November 2, 1998

[Mom] It's always wonderful to get Paul's letters and be reassured of his well-being. A couple of weeks ago he sent a roll of film and I got it developed. I was eager to see the developed pictures but when I did, I was aghast at how thin he looked. I showed them to Daddy and he tried to reassure me that he wasn't thin and that he looked great.

When Tim got home from school, I asked him if he wanted to see some missionary pictures (and I didn't mention anything about how thin Paul looked). The first thing he said was, "Look how thin he is!" Later I confronted Daddy with that and he admitted that Paul did look a little thinner than when he left but he was sure he was alright and doing fine. I'm not so sure!

One letter he sent to Mike was all in Spanish and we delivered it when we took the car to Provo for him. Mike read it while we were in his apartment and told us that Paul and his companion had been chased by an investigator wielding a knife. They had climbed over a fence and hidden in an apartment and climbed out the back window to escape.

I hadn't been told in our weekly letters anything about this and it made me wonder what other missionary experiences he is not sharing. Anyway, we do love getting his letters and hope he feels our love and support. I am in the process of getting him accepted to Ricks for fall of '99 and tracking down his scholarships and making sure his sponsors know that he is returning to school.

Tim spent the better part of last week organizing an assembly to highlight the football and cross-country teams that were entering state tournaments last weekend. Pat Tiede wanted him and his friend, Chris, to do a spoof on a national assembly they had seen featuring two guys doing stunts on snake-boards (similar to a skate board only it has two pads for your feet that twist independently).

They dressed up in skating gear, including Barbie Doll helmets, army socks, knee pads, goggles, and a bunch of other ridiculous stuff and went riding in the gym trying to do snake board tricks.

It was obvious to the audience that they were totally spastic when it came to the snake boards, so Tim dared anyone in the audience who wanted to show that they could do any better to volunteer to demonstrate for the student body. He called down several volunteers. Three of them had been asked in advance unbeknownst to the audience and they took off on the boards and were doing great.

Tim was on the microphone and was instructing what not to do such as tying your foot to it. Meanwhile, behind him some of the volunteers were taping another volunteers foot to the board. Tim turned around and pretended to be surprised that they were doing the very thing he had told them not to do and at that moment the boy being taped to the board fell over and his wooden leg stayed on the board and went sliding across the floor.

Of course, this had all been carefully planned and orchestrated by Tim and his friends and the boy with the wooden leg. Never-the-less, Tim pretended to be shocked at what had happened and he was telling the volunteers to get the other boy out of there and he picked up the board and leg and took off running, too.

I guess the crowd really came alive when Tim and Chris first went running out in their ridiculous outfits and the whole skit was a huge success. It was probably the first time a lot of the kids had seen Tim as a cut-up and I think he even surprised himself. I was home worrying about Marcus (the boy with the wooden leg) because I didn't want him to be embarrassed by the skit, but Tim reassured me that he was as excited as anyone to be in it and didn't have any reservations about it. When the day was over and Tim arrived home and related the experience, I felt relieved that it had gone well and that Marcus had been okay with it. You never know.

We are still experiencing beautiful fall weather and Saturday we spent the day cutting wood, rolling up hoses, cleaning out the flower garden, and moving the rabbit hutch into the pasture. It was unusually warm for this time of year and that evening for the first time ever, SaraKay actually went trick-or-treating without wearing a big winter coat.

We received word yesterday that Shauntel and Randy bought a home. Becky and Chet signed

papers yesterday, too, and both couples will be moving in the next couple of weeks. I'm hoping that by now Jonie and Jeff are in their new place. In her letter last week she said that they will be disconnected from phone and e-mail for a couple of weeks while everything is changed over. What a blessing to have so many of you able to buy a home!

Sunday we went to see Becky and Chet and spend a couple hours with them. When we first got there Madison was sleeping in her bedroom and we tiptoed in to see her. Becky expressed how much joy she is to them and how she never imagined that motherhood would be so rewarding. Last night when Shauntel called to tell us about their new house, she told me of a little incident that happened with Camille last week.

Her thoughts were similar to Becky's and I couldn't help thinking how joyful parenting is despite the many long hours, expenses, and ups and downs. In the temple we are taught that joy in this life comes through our posterity and I have certainly found that to be the case in my life.

Stephani is a new Primary President again. She said maybe this third time she'll get it right! Linds said that the ward is thrilled to have her as the new president. The former president moved two weeks ago and Stephani knew that they would be calling a new president so one night after a bishopric meeting she asked Linds if they had talked about the new president and Linds replied that, yes, they had selected a new president.

When he wasn't free with any more details of the selection, Steph pressed him a little for any clue as to who it was. His comment to her was, "I think you'll like her". It wasn't until the following Sunday that she received an invitation to meet with the Bishop and the formal call was extended. How Linds kept that secret for five days and kept a straight face is beyond me.

Aunt Jeanie called to say they may have a double wedding on December 19th. Julianne has also found a boyfriend and it's moving towards the temple. Isn't it wonderful that Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are in Arizona to celebrate all these joyous occasions with the Gentry's! I guess the Lord knew that in the two years they served there they would see Julianne

return from her mission, Miken and husband welcome their firstborn, Christian leave on his mission, Maren compete in the Miss Arizona pageant, Bethany get baptized, and now Maren and Julianne getting married.

[Dad] Halloween was well, Halloween. I enjoyed carving a couple big pumpkins according to SaraKay's specifications and adding them to our front door decor of pumpkins, corn stalks, and a milk bottle skeleton. But we must have scared everyone away—we only had about 20 trick-or-treaters.

November 10, 1998

[Mom] I will be in Boise for the Idaho School Board Convention this week. Daddy is going with me this year and I am excited to have him finally come. Tim has a state student body officer's convention in Boise Thursday-Saturday so Becky is helping me out with SaraKay after Tim leaves. I'm trading her babysitting time since next week is her big week to move and she will need me to help with that.

(Later) I just returned from walking with Janet Jenks and she told me an interesting story. Saturday night Jared, their 21-year-old returned missionary, and four of his friends took dates bowling in Idaho Falls. They are all students at Ricks. When they pulled into the parking lot, they noticed several carloads of Hispanics were just leaving. Jared and his friends went into the bowling alley to bowl. About an hour later as they were leaving, they noticed that someone had placed beer bottles behind their tires and they proceeded to get rid of them. A Hispanic fellow approached them and started yelling obscenities at them. When they ignored him, he started shoving one of the boys around. Again they tried to ignore him and get into their cars with their dates.

Finally, the Hispanic forcefully shoved one of the group and the other boy came up to defend and try to ward off the attack. He shoved the Hispanic. The minute that happened, several Hispanics appeared out of nowhere and started beating up Jared and his four friends. They were so shocked at this turn of events that they yelled at the girls to get in the cars for protection.

One girl bolted from the scene and ran into the bowling alley and told someone to call the police. In the meantime, Jared and his friends were doing all they could to fend off the attack.

The gang got the five boys separated and two held their arms while some of the rest beat on them. Jared was hit in the face with some brass knuckles and got a gash that bled profusely. Those working him over seemed satisfied with that and backed off a little.

Suddenly someone yelled, "Police", and the gang disappeared as quickly as they had arrived. Whoever yelled, "Police" probably saved them from serious injury because the police didn't arrive for several more minutes. All the boys were taken to the hospital and Jared received seven stitches.

One of Jared's friends was from Idaho Falls and they called his dad to come to the hospital. On their way home about 2 a.m. they were stopped at a stop light and they realized that the car alongside of them was the car of the gang member who had initiated the fight. Because the boys were in a different car, the Hispanics didn't realize who they were. Jared's group had a cellular phone and called the police and then followed the gang until the police pulled the car over. They were able to identify and have the gang members arrested.

It was an unbelievable story and such an odd twist of fate that here is a young returned missionary who has just given two years of his life to serve a mission to Mexico and he comes home and gets beaten up by a Hispanic gang.

As Janet and I talked through the whole event, we came up with some insights. We thought that maybe if Jared and his bunch had not done all they could to just ward off the attack, such as if they had started being really aggressive about fighting back, maybe the guns and knives would have come out. It's hard to say just what would have happened. Jared said that even as he was being hit, he noticed that some of the gang members were not as vicious and aggressive and were not as comfortable with the scenario as others were.

It was a blessing that the gang never tried to hurt the girls. All in all, Janet said that they felt very fortunate that it wasn't any worse than it was. Another bright spot is that one of Jared's friend's dad is a lawyer and he is going to take care of the legal ramifications of it for them. Janet said they were a little nervous about retaliation but felt like they needed to press charges. What a frightening situation.

One of the funny things about the event was the response of the girls. One started screaming the minute the gang arrived and never quit until it was over. Jared said it was rather obnoxious despite the danger they were in. Another girl stayed calm and another one let off a string of swear words that was so bad she called them all the next day to apologize.

One of the boys had a date with the same girl the next night and they were riding along when he changed lanes and cut a driver off. At the next stop light, the driver of the other vehicle jumped out of his car, ran up to their door, ripped it open and told him to get out!

Luckily the other passenger in the car got out and diffused the situation before a fight erupted. I'll bet he's wondering, "What next?" I guess the thing I wanted us all to learn from this story is that we do live in a wicked world and although we can take precautions and do our best to be kind, situations can develop and we need to be wise. Also, drive defensively but not aggressively and try to be a peacemaker.

Last Thursday I spent the day running errands. I needed to get Paul's Christmas package in the mail and pick up some other gifts in town. Becky was doing a "walk through" at their new house with the realtor and I wanted to see their new home so I arranged to meet her for that. (It is a lovely home with lots of room and a beautiful back yard.) Daddy and I have had such a difficult time finding time for going to the temple and so we decided that we would try to catch an evening session that night.

By the time I got to the temple, I was so uptight from meeting all the deadlines that I could hardly concentrate on the temple ceremony. I kept having to bring myself back mentally to the session and what was being said. I felt badly to be so frazzled but I did finally feel like I was able to concentrate and feel the Spirit.

[Dad] Last night's Chamber's dinner and program was great. There are such sweet kids in that group and they have a wonderful sound! Tim sang a solo, "Sea Fever," and his quartet sang a couple of numbers. They sounded great!

We had an interesting experience in getting ready for the production. Tim came home early from school and looked all over for his tux outfit for the show. He couldn't find it so he left a note for Sue and she looked all over and couldn't find

it. She was getting quite frantic thinking of all the places it could have been left or stolen. Finally, Tim remembered loaning it to Chet for a Melaleuca event. Chet had flown out this morning to New York for the week and Sue tried to get a hold of Becky with no success. As the time wore on and she wasn't able to get through to Becky she became more and more concerned.

I was in Idaho Falls for an all-day staff meeting and got the message to not leave Idaho Falls without calling home first. Just before five o'clock I called home and became involved in the crisis. I drove over to Becky's place and checked all the doors and visited with their neighbor to no avail.

Finally, Sue connected with Becky at her friend's house and we were able to get the tux and I was able to get home by 6:15 to pick up Sue and SaraKay for the 6:30 dinner and show. It would have been tragic if Tim hadn't been able to be a part of the final numbers presented by the whole group because of misplacing his outfit.

Sunday was a busy day with teaching the High Priests, Cub committee meeting, choir practice, home teaching, and fireside. We were able to get everything done and still find time for a planning and scripture time. I enjoyed my priesthood lesson on Church Government and couldn't help contrasting the votes on the first Tuesday in November-the general election, with the first Saturday-- October--General Conference.

Saturday was the Cub Scout Pow Wow and University of Scouting held at Snake River for the whole council. There were people from Malad, Star Valley, Jackson, West Yellowstone, Salmon, Lost River, and all of the heartland of the council. Over 650 adult Scouters were there to receive instruction on every aspect of the program: Dutch Oven cooking, winter camping, games, derby's, and so on. It was a great success.

Thursday, Perry Cochell was here from the Western Region office to work with me on several prospective donors. We met with a great deal of success in our meetings and were pleased with the appointments we had. I took him to the airport that night and went straight to the temple to meet Sue. It feels good to feel the peace of the temple seep into my soul.

At the Ricks devotional on October 27, Merrill J. Bateman shared an experience of hosting a group from Russia who had also visited a university in Los Angeles. The visitors had mentally compared the students and asked Elder Bateman if they brought those from LA to the BYU Campus, if they could be changed to be like the students they encountered on the Provo campus. "No," was Elder Bateman's reply, "You would have to begin with the parents."

November 18, 1998

[Dad] Today I am headed to Salt Lake and doing a number of things on the way. I am taking an old dresser to Tooele, having lunch with Steve downtown, picking up some furniture for Chet and Becky from his folks, getting some things from Arch and Ilene, and going to an investing seminar.

Saturday, I had the 90-day reunion for my Wood Badge course. The purpose is to get together and have the participants do the teaching as we review the eleven leadership skills, and then to make sure they are making progress on their tickets. We only had three participants missing. I have never seen a reunion that well attended. It was good to see all the participants again and to feel the strong sense of mission in what we are doing to touch the lives of boys.

Last Friday was a Holiday Auction to benefit Scouting held in the Shilo Inn in Idaho Falls. It was moderately successful—we needed more people there with deep pockets. This week we are holding the one in Pocatello and hopefully we will be more successful with it.

[Mom] Our stay in Boise was short and sweet. They had some wonderful seminars and interesting presentations. I had mixed emotions about going since we have had so much going on here at home and I had a hard time putting all those concerns aside.

The experience I am having with Tim this year is so reminiscent of what I experienced with some of the rest of you. He is running in every direction and I am running along behind, picking up the pieces, and urging him to "hang in there" for another day. I have tried to analyze what is wrong with this whole scenario and I suspect that it is just a case of having too much to do and too little time in which to do it. We didn't foresee when Tim ran for a student body office

that he would be called to be stake youth committee chairman. We tried to get his toughest classes in this first tri so that they would go on scholarship apps and he would have them under his belt when he took his ACT.

We also didn't realize that having the football team playing every week until Thanksgiving would require Tim to have a continuous flow of assemblies, an exhausting task after all the skits and ideas have been used! Anyway, we are nearly through with Calculus, Chemistry, Odell's composition, and the last assembly for the team is this Friday before they leave for the state championship game in Boise.

Tomorrow I will go to Idaho Falls to help Becky and Chet. Becky spent the last several weeks packing and preparing for moving day. It is always a chore to move but the up side of it is that you have a chance to discard and assess what you have and what has outgrown its usefulness. We are in the process of doing that downstairs. It has felt good to get some of the rooms gone through. I hope after Christmas to begin my painting project and eventually get some carpet for the entire basement.

Shauntel and Randy will be arriving on December 9th and will leave for Iowa on the 20th. The sealing will be at 11 :30 in the Idaho Falls Temple on the 19th and Becky and Chet are hosting a dinner afterwards. I can't think of a nicer way to celebrate Christmas than sharing that temple experience together.

November 24, 1998

[Dad] When I went to the frig to get milk for my cereal this morning and saw a big bird in there, I realized that the day after tomorrow is Thanksgiving. It hardly seems real. Last night for home evening we were helping Chet and Becky move across town. They were able to sell their old house for enough to make the down payment and pay the closing costs on a new and bigger home on the west side of Idaho Falls. They wanted to replace a number of the light fixtures, so I took my tools and worked on that project while everyone else was moving, hauling, and cleaning. It is a lovely home. Sue took Madison for the day so they could get a lot of the small stuff hauled into their home and settled during the day.

Sunday, Brother Wray came up to me after sacrament meeting and asked if we would

speak next week on temple covenants. He said he wanted someone treating the subject that could really teach by example and by precept. Last Saturday, we got the rest of the wood box area cleaned up, the fire going, and the inside wood box filled. SaraKay is such good help and will work right along beside me as long as I have something for her to do. She also enjoyed having some time with her bunnies—they are sure growing and seem to be thriving.

We were excited to listen to most of the BYU game and to have them luck out in their win over Utah. Mike said that in Provo, the campus just erupted with cheers and yelling and horns honking when Utah's kick hit the goal post and bounced out in the closing seconds of the game. On Friday, Snake River beat the Kuna Cavemen for the A-2 State Championship in football. The kids all had CC's on their helmets for Coach Colin Clough, the defensive coach, who had just been diagnosed with a brain tumor and was going in for surgery this week.

[Mom] It's a cold, blustery day outside but it feels cozy and warm inside with the wood burning stove fired up. As Daddy has told you, he and SaraKay and Tim spent part of Saturday cutting up the rest of the loose wood and getting it ready to be burned. We didn't use our stove much last winter and a lot of the wood we had gotten from various sources was getting old. We decided to use it up this winter and be more current on our rotation although we are hoping to gear down as far as hauling and using wood. It is an interesting challenge to have fuel for a year on hand when we are trying not to use wood anymore, but if we have a year's supply in reserve, at some point it has to be used.

I was reading President Hinckley's talk in the last conference's Priesthood session in which he counseled all of us to get our finances in order and to be prepared for any eventuality. He said among other things, "There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed." His closing paragraph stated, "May the Lord bless you, my beloved brethren, to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts. That's all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable."

Daddy and I spent considerable time talking about this and want to counsel each of you to find a small place in your homes where you can have some shelves and start gathering in provisions that would assist you in troubled times. I sent each of you a list of suggested food storage items. This needs to be adjusted for your individual circumstances and added to food items should be bedding, fuel of some sort, such as a Coleman stove and propane for it, and clothing sufficient for a year.

If felt good to get Becky and Chet into their lovely new home. I visited with Shauntel last week and I know that they are moving this weekend. What a chore! Hopefully she can get things organized and prepared so that in Randy's few hours off they can get their move made. Moves are usually so bad that you wonder if it's worth it but once it's over, you are glad you persisted.

I'm looking forward to having family here for Thanksgiving. The next couple of days are going to be full of cleaning and cooking. Christine is coming in tomorrow, John, Laurel, Emma, and Mike will arrive about seven, Becky, Chet, Madison and Chet's family from West Jordan along with a Korean student and a friend of Becky's will come Thursday for volleyball and dinner. Steve and Bonnie and little ones will come Thursday night after spending the day with Bonnie's folks.

Tim survived his harried week. The composition for Odell's class was so difficult that Odell extended the due date four days so that the assignment could be completed. Even then it was a marathon. I'll bet Tim spent nearly 20 hours at the computer before he was finished! Yesterday he found out that he had squeaked by with an A in both Calculus and Chemistry so he was elated. He knows this tri's grades will go in on his scholarship forms and he was hoping to do well.

He went with friends to Boise last Friday for the state championship game and they got stranded for the night. (Sounds a little fishy, doesn't it?) The car they took had a windshield wiper break off and they couldn't find a place that late at night to fix it and it was raining so bad that they just got a motel room and the eight of them sacked out for the night and got up at six the next morning to drive home for other commitments

December 1, 1998

[Mom] It's Tuesday morning and I've got a big day ahead of me preparing for our Laurel (Young Women) Christmas dinner tonight. Last night when I asked Daddy if he would help me get the Christmas decorations up he looked at me like I was nuts, but I reminded him that today was my Laurel dinner party and so he consented.

We had a short lesson first because Tim had a student council meeting at 7:30 and we wanted to have something for him before he left for the evening. Although it has been a hassle for me to put together this dinner so soon after Thanksgiving, I am grateful to have it finished. December really gets harried by the time we schedule in all our YW activities, service projects, assignments for the ward party, Chamber and orchestra concerts, family events, cantata practices, and such. I've been determined that we will simplify things so that the season isn't such a marathon, but invariably the calendar fills up.

On December 9th Shauntel and Randy will fly in from Iowa and spend a couple of weeks visiting with family. On the 19th at 11:30 they will have Camille sealed to them. It is going to be the highlight of the holiday season for Daddy and me! Stephani is making arrangements to join us for the event and those living in Utah as well as Becky and Chet are planning to come.

When I called Shauntel last Saturday for her birthday, she said they were in their new house. The elders from the ward had just finished helping them move all the heavy stuff and Randy had gone back to get the washer and dryer. They had to have the old apartment cleaned and ready for another occupant today so I'm sure that yesterday was an enormous day for them. Shauntel was excited about their lovely new home!

Thanksgiving was a lot of fun. Since we didn't have a lot of family here, we invited some friends to join us including Chet's family and a Korean friend who is attending Ricks College as well as another friend of Becky's who she coached with last year. Chet's parents gave us a poinsettia plant for our holiday season. It is so beautiful and such a nice addition to our home. A couple of years ago John bought me a poinsettia plant as a late birthday gift. It was the first one I had ever received and I loved having it

around. I nursed it along for months thinking that come Christmas I would use it again. It grew and flourished all year and about December 1st I called the florist to see when I could anticipate it blossoming again. He sadly informed me that for a poinsettia to blossom it has to be kept in total darkness for several months prior to Christmas and given special care in the days following its dormant stage. He said that it is such a big task to get them to blossom that most people find that purchasing them is easier.

Christine came and we thoroughly enjoyed her. She is definitely SaraKay's favorite cousin since she babysat her last August and she is so helpful and pleasant to have around. John and Laurel and Mike arrived about five on Wednesday and left Sunday afternoon. We sure loved getting better acquainted with "Baby Emma" as Nate calls her. She is such a pleasant little girl and we took turns passing her around and playing with her the whole weekend.

Steve and Bonnie came Thursday night. Their young family is growing up and it was fun to see the kids head downstairs and play so well with very little supervision from anyone. Even Kristine is walking and toddles around. It is wonderful for Steve and Bonnie to have a break from the constant pressure of three pre-schoolers.

Sunday our family spoke in church on Oaths and Covenants. Once a month the bishopric asks a family to give the sacrament meeting program and since our family usually has so many turns with missionary farewells and reports, we haven't ever had to do it. When Daddy mentioned last Monday that Brother Wray had requested we speak, I couldn't believe it! I knew the week I had ahead of me and wondered how I would find time to prepare a talk. Somehow, with the help of Becky and Chet who played host to our company on Friday and Saturday afternoon, I had some quiet time here at home in which to prepare. I think both Daddy and I felt good about how things went. It was the first time SaraKay had ever given a talk in sacrament meeting and she was nervous but she did a wonderful job.

Tim spoke on the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood. He came home from work Saturday and Daddy gave him some reading materials for resources. He disappeared into his bedroom and came up about an hour later with his talk

ready. Daddy and I were in the computer room pouring over ours and I wondered what Tim could possibly have come up with in so short a time. Later I questioned him but he seemed pretty confident about it so I backed off and decided to trust him. When he gave his remarks in sacrament meeting, I was very pleased with the sentiments he expressed and I felt that it was obvious that he had prepared them himself; he did a fine job.

I appreciated Becky and Chet inviting the group over for a sibling's party on Friday evening. I worried that it was too soon after their move to host a party but Becky said they had made pretty good progress towards getting their household organized. It was nice for us to be able to help them. I just wished that we could have been closer and given Shauntel and Randy some relief in their move. I know how impossible it is to get much done with a little one around. It seems especially upsetting to a child who is old enough to recognize that something is happening to their world and they don't understand what. Shauntel said that Camille would crawl around and then pull herself up to a box that was in the middle of the room and look around like, "What is going on here! Where are all my familiar things?"

We received some pictures from Paul last week in which he was helping clean up a house of some flood victims. The water line was about six inches down from the ceiling and everything was covered with muck. Marlene Acevedo said that her husband, Robert, just got back from Guatemala and he said it is difficult to describe the devastation, especially among the poor whose homes were the least able to withstand the mud slides and torrential rains. He said that the authorities estimate that around 30,000 people were missing who will never be accounted for because they were swept away or buried by mud slides. What a terrible loss for the people of that region! President Hinckley is making a visit to the disaster area and assessing the damage. Our prayers go out to the people.

December 2, 1998

[Dad] I thought it might be interesting to include the text of my talk on Sunday because it has so many good quotes that maybe you could use. I sure love each of you and hope this season of the year finds you well and happy and being

blessed with the righteous desires of your hearts. Love, DAD

TEMPLE COVENANTS

Sacrament Meeting, November 29, 1998

As I have been teaching the writings and thoughts of Brigham Young this year to the High Priests, I have really grown to love and appreciate him as a prophet. He said one time: "I feel sometimes like lecturing men and women severely who enter into covenants without realizing the nature of the covenants they make, and who use little or no effort to fulfill them." Our purpose today is to help understand the meaning, significance and consequences of the covenants we make as Latter-day Saints, particularly those of the temple, and hopefully, motivate us to fulfill them. Most of my thoughts are taken from modern scripture the conference talks recorded in the May and November Ensigns of this year.

We are blessed to live at a pivotal time in the history of the world as we are on the threshold of ushering in the Millennium. One of the significant developments of the last few years has been the pace at which temples are being built. Elder George Q. Cannon said: "Every foundation stone that is laid for a temple, and every temple completed lessens the power of Satan on the earth, and increases the power of God and Godliness" (George Q. Cannon)

Thirteen years ago President Hinckley said: "The sacred and important work that goes on in temples must be accelerated, and for this to happen, it is necessary that temples be taken closer to the people rather than having the people travel so far to temples" As of last April conference we had 53 temples functioning, with 15 more under construction and an additional 26 temple sites being prepared for groundbreaking. More have been added since to bring the total to nearly 100 temples President Hinckley's goal for the year 2000.

Again, President Hinckley said, "If temple ordinances are an essential part of the restored gospel, and I testify that they are, then we must provide the means by which they can be accomplished The temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer." (President Hinckley)

The covenants we enter into as members of the Church are all part of the new and everlasting covenant the fulness of the gospel which

ultimately leads us to an inheritance in the celestial kingdom. Through the ordinance of baptism, we in effect sign our name to the contract of salvation. Through the ordinance of the sacrament we renew those baptismal covenants and receive the promise of the Holy Ghost to guide and comfort us as we are obedient to the commandments of God.

By ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood we physically sign our name to a document covenanting to keep the commandments and in turn receive all that the Father hath.

Tithing is a covenant tied to physical and spiritual blessings. Sabbath observance is a universal covenant with a blessing made with the children of Israel and renewed with each generation. The Word of Wisdom is a covenant relating to physical strength and well-being as well as rich spiritual blessings.

In the temple we enter into many exalting covenants and so it goes, the more faithful and devoted a person is, the more of the covenants of the Lord are revealed to him leading to a fulness when his calling and election are made sure.

Sister Virginia Jensen, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency gave an interesting perspective of temple covenants when she said that we must come to *“...understand the blessings that come from making and keeping sacred temple covenants. In the temple we make eternal covenants with our Father in Heaven. We make promises to Him and in return He makes extraordinary promises to us. The next time you go to the temple, whether for yourself or your kindred dead, pay careful attention to the promises God makes to you...in every part of the temple, the hallowed halls of God’s house are filled with comforting covenants; personal, intimate assurances of His eternal love.”*

Elder David Sorensen of the presidency of the Seventy said, *“...temples are of great value to us because they help us express our core theology, that of coming to Christ.”* He mentions a couple of ways they help us. First of all, they symbolically remind us and teach us of Christ and His Father...spires, white clothing—washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. The closeness that comes through consistent worship. The sight of the temple should serve as a reminder

of covenants we have made, the need for integrity, and the fact that God is never far away.

“Beyond their physical presence and outward symbolism, temples can inspire us to come unto Christ in a second way that is, by the ordinances we perform in them. All temple ordinances are centered in Jesus Christ and His divine mission, and they are performed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. D&C 84:21 says, *“And without the ordinances thereof, the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh”*. Each ordinance is calculated to reveal to us something about Christ and our relationship to God.

As I was in the temple this past week I was contemplating this assignment and the thought came to me that our temple covenants begin with our recommend interview and our affirming to our priesthood leaders that we are obeying the commandments and sustaining the leaders of the Church, that we are in fact living the Word of Wisdom, living the law of tithing, living the law of chastity, maintaining proper relationships with our family members and so on. Then we conclude that interview with our signature affirming that we have told the truth and are worthy to enter into the House of the Lord.

Each time we use that recommend, as we enter the temple, we reaffirm at the recommend desk that we are living in harmony with the covenants we have made and are worthy to reenter the Lord’s House.

Through the course of the endowment we raise our arm to the square a number of times to solemnly attest that we will keep various sacred covenants including the Law of the Gospel, the Law of Sacrifice, the Law of Chastity, the Law of Consecration, and that we will keep in sacred confidence the signs and tokens of the Priesthood which we receive there that Brigham Young described as enabling us to pass the angels who stand as sentinels to enter into the Celestial World.

Elder M. Russell Ballard said, “We as individuals and families need to counsel together to carefully examine ourselves and our personal and family commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The examination is particularly essential to those of us who have made covenants of consecration and sacrifice in the house of the Lord. We need to ask ourselves: Are we setting

an example of Christian virtue and gospel faithfulness in our lives and in our homes? Are we reaching out to our inactive and nonmember friends, family members, and neighbors with loving concern? Are we boldly sharing our testimonies?" Are we truly giving or willing to give all that we have, even our own lives if necessary, to building up the Kingdom of God on the earth and helping to establish Zion in preparation for the coming of the Lord?

As we contemplate the covenants we make, we realize that each and every covenant lifts us, perfects us, reminds us of our allegiance to our Father in Heaven, reminds us further of the commandments we must obey, and finally reconfirms our Father's love for us and desire to give us everything that he has.

Joseph Smith taught, "For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God...A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary to lead unto life and salvation". Those who make the sacrifice will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God. "washed clean in the blood of the lamb (Revelation 7:14.)

President Faust said, "Covenants are not simply outward rituals; they are real and effective means of change." If we honor and keep sacred the saving covenants we make with the Lord we receive the promise in D&C 42:61: "Thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal." He also said, "Many covenants are indispensable to happiness here and hereafter. Among the most important are the marriage covenants made between husband and wife. From these covenants flow the greatest joys of life." I can attest to that from my observations and feelings as much of our family gathered for

Thanksgiving. There is no greater joy than a righteous posterity! "Temple covenants are the basis for attaining the greatest blessings the Lord has for us." (Pres. Faust)

December 7, 1998

[Mom] Last night we attended the First Presidency's annual Christmas Fireside. I was hoping that President Hinckley would comment on Honduras and he did, alluding to the help that the church is giving to the membership there. I have thought so much about the devastation they have experienced and grieved over the situation they now find themselves in.

Bishop Acevedo just returned from visiting Guatemala and he reported in High Priest Quorum about what he saw and experienced as he made the trip to locate some of his family. The only way he was able to get to them was by helicopter since many of the roads and bridges to some of the outlying areas were destroyed. Whole villages were buried and all that many of the people had was swept away. What a bleak situation especially at Christmas time.

What a contrast to the abundance we enjoy. Last week we had a couple of snowstorms that swept through the area leaving roads icy and about a foot of snow on the ground. Daddy built a fire in our stove downstairs and we were warm and cozy and secure. We have been blessed to have a good job and some financial security and we feel so fortunate that all of you children have good jobs and money to meet your needs.

We are especially grateful for good health. Two of our closest friends, Bishop Godfrey and Claudia Wray are having some serious problems and it has made me realize even more how fortunate Daddy and I have been. Bishop is scheduled for surgery on December 15th. Hopefully they will be able to get all the cancer and he will have a good prognosis.

Claudia's tests from the Mayo Clinic were inconclusive and they suspect that she has some sort of disease of the pancreas but she isn't getting any answers for now. Much of our testimony meeting yesterday was centered around these two situations and also the passing of Lorraine Wray. It was a very touching meeting and certainly gave me a lot to think about in terms of gratitude and building relationships.

I had a busy week with the Laurel Christmas dinner, the Relief Society party, and preparing for the ward Christmas dinner. The YW were assigned the food and so we have been getting things ready for that. Yesterday Daddy and Tim got their home teaching done, our home teachers came, tonight is Tim's Chamber's Christmas Concert, tomorrow night the ward dinner, Wednesday V.T. and Thursday the orchestra concert.

I've got school board also tomorrow night but it looks like a pretty light agenda. The Board is making the last two school visits on the 10th and the 14th and then my calendar opens up and there will be time for shopping and cooking and visiting.

We're excited to have Shauntel and Randy and Camille coming and can hardly wait to see them. Marilyn is driving to Salt Lake on Wednesday to pick them up. They may stay in Salt Lake long enough to see the lights on Temple Square.

Daddy's birthday is tomorrow and I guess we will celebrate it at the ward party. The office staff bought him a couple of pies last week for his birthday and the kids and I have some gifts to brighten his day. If any of you are thinking of phoning just remember that he will be at the ward party from about 6-8:30 pm. I know he would love to hear from you.

Tim spent part of the weekend working on scholarships and filling out his apps to Ricks College. It has been a challenge finding time to address these matters and time is ticking away. Saturday he had a five-hour Chamber practice and then the Jenks invited him to play some basketball after that.

He left about 2:15 after watching BYU lose to Air Force and he didn't drag home until nearly five. By some wonderful stroke of fate, the Jenks and Tim all got on the same Jazz team this year and they will also be playing church ball together. The priest team has been practicing at 6 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

I need to get supper in the oven so Tim gets to eat before leaving for make-up call at six. SaraKay just got home and said that her school got to see the Chamber's program today and Tim and all his friends made a big fuss over her when the cast shook the hands of the third-graders following the performance.

[Dad] Sue mentioned our testimony meeting on Sunday. I wanted to comment on the outpouring of love that was felt in that meeting. It started with Clark Wray and his expression of love for his mother, who has had another stroke and is recovering at the extended care facility associated with the hospital in town. Bishop Clifford Wray talked about having lost his wife a few weeks ago and how he has come to know what love really is. Farrell Wray spoke about his love for his mother as well, and also about the respect and love for his wife. With her uncertain health condition we all really felt for them. It is amazing to me how much your friends and fellow ward members can become a part of your life and the depth of feelings you can have for them—almost like family!

We were delighted with the Chambers program last night. It was well done! John Grayson has a real talent for putting together an outstanding program and getting the most from the kids.

Yes, today is the big day—big double nickels—55! I feel so blessed to be able to enjoy such good health, have such a wonderful family, have the love of such a beautiful companion, enjoy the blessings of the Gospel in my life, to live here in this great community, and to have such a rewarding job! Truly the Lord has blessed me far above what I deserve.

December 15, 1998

[Dad] It was a relief to hear that Paul had received his Christmas packages and that all is well with him. With all the sickness and problems his companions have had we are grateful that he has enjoyed such good health. We are looking forward to our Christmas call with him. It is hard to believe, but his cousin Ryan is coming home in two weeks.

Last night we had a family Christmas party at Gary and Linda's. It was simple and fun—the biggest fun was all the babies that were crawling or walking around. Roger and Mindy had their three there, the twins are fourteen months old now. Shaunnie & Randy were there with Camille, 10 months; and Becky and Chet with Madison, 5 months. We all had a great time! The grandkids have a hard time not getting confused between Gary and me as to who is really their grandfather.

We are looking forward to the temple on Saturday and having Camille sealed to her

parents. We will be able to have Mike, John and Laurel, Steve and Bonnie, and Stephani added to the above-mentioned family members!

Last week was my community orchestra concert on Thursday night. It meant a lot to have Shaunnie there for part of it. I really enjoy being a part of that community effort to maintain a little culture. This time I felt that I was really an asset and helping to carry the orchestra a few times. We have a lot of young kids from Blackfoot and Snake River who aren't that experienced, but it is great to have them trying so hard. I look forward to the time that SaraKay can join us on the violin.

[Mom] Today is my "hump day" for Christmas. It's the day I decide that many of my holiday plans aren't going to be realized and I start eliminating projects and start focusing on the "musts". Each year I think I'm simplifying my holiday season but inevitably life becomes complicated before the big day arrives.

Shauntel and Camille have been here with me this morning and we've wrapped some gifts, prepared some boxes for mutual tonight and worked on homemade candy. It's nice to have Shauntel, Randy, and Camille here for this past week and to include them in many of our holiday happenings. It is a rare treat!

Daddy mentioned the Larsen Christmas party last night. We appreciated Gary and Linda's invitation and we enjoyed the chance to gather with family. They had decorated their yard and home so beautifully and were such gracious hosts. Linda commented that she has been going in so many directions with preparing for Ryan's arrival and Christmas, too. I'm sure it will bring a lot of excitement to their holidays to have a missionary arriving home on the 30th.

I have been anxiously anticipating our "white Christmas" in the temple on Saturday. As usual, there are a lot of details to take care of before we can relax regarding the event, but that's part of the fun of it. Thursday night Shauntel is driving to Salt Lake to pick up Stephani at 11 at the airport and then the two of them will be spending the night at Steve and Bonnie's. Friday morning they will head home just a few hours ahead of Steve and Bonnie who will be leaving about noon. Steve and Nathan will be arriving here at around five and Bonnie and girls will continue on to Idaho Falls to spend some time

with Bonnie's family. Jean (Bonnie's mother) will babysit Rachel and Christine while we are in the temple.

Mike and a roommate will be arriving about midnight on Friday and be with us in the temple also. John and Laurel are making their trip early Saturday morning and will meet us at the temple. We will arrange for Tim to babysit Emma and Madison in the waiting room of the temple during the sealing.

Randy's mom is going to help with Camille in the nursery while Randy and Shauntel get in their temple clothes and take care of the final paper work. Although Randy and Shauntel need to be in the temple by 10:30, the rest of us don't have to be there until 11:00.

Everyone can be in their street clothes except those involved in the sealing. Don't forget to bring your recommends! Becky and Chet will meet us at the temple around 11 and after the sealing they have invited everyone to have dinner at their home. I suspect that we will finish the dinner and be back here about four. I know that several of you need to return to Utah that evening so we are making plans to expedite your departure before it gets too late.

Shauntel and Randy will be flying out Sunday at noon for Iowa. I know that there has been a lot of sickness and we are praying that everyone can stay well and travel safely. Daddy has been checking the weather and it is forecasted that no storms are due in so hopefully you who are traveling will have good roads.

We send best wishes to Shawn (Charles and Brenda's) who will be entering the MTC the Wednesday following Christmas. We send our love and greetings to all of the extended family and pray the Lord to bless you with peace and happiness in your families. We look forward to hearing from Paul and Grandpa and Grandma Larsen in the mission field and recognize the good they are doing in furthering the Lord's work. We feel grateful for the life and health of Grandpa and Grandma Richards and hope they feel of our love and concern. We recognize the Lord's blessings to us and give thanks for each of you and the privilege it is to be a part of your lives and feel of your love and support for us. Have a Merry Christmas! God bless. Mom

[Mom] Daddy has given you a brief synopsis of our experiences last week culminating with our

day in the temple. So much effort and anticipation had gone into our weekend that when I finally sat down late Saturday night to assess what needed to be done this week to complete preparations for Christmas, I felt like Christmas (for me at least) was over. This was especially true because Steph, Steve and Bonnie and family, and Shaunte! and Randy were all winging their way home and the house was nearly quiet again. Thank goodness John and Laurel and Emma and Mike remained to help us get some Christmas cheer and finish our preparations for this Friday.

Daddy mentioned that SaraKay was sick Saturday morning. I had been concerned all week that the flu bug might interfere with our well-laid plans especially since Shaunte!, Randy, and Camille had all had it and it had been passed around to Randy's entire family during the week. I was also worried that there would be a mishap of some sort, or a malfunction of a car, and so all week I had been praying that things would come together without being marred.

At about three Saturday morning SaraKay started vomiting and kept it up until we left at about 9:30. I had arranged for a babysitter for her but she expressed such a strong desire to be in the temple with the rest of the family that morning that Daddy administered to her and we bundled her up and took her with us with the understanding that she should not get close to the babies.

When we arrived at the temple, we thought we would have Tim and SaraKay keep a watch on Madison and Emma in the waiting room, but the temple was hosting 37 marriages that morning and the entire lobby and waiting room were "standing room only". It was such a crowded situation that we finally decided to take the group to the visitor's center and let them wait there.

Although it was unusual to see the lobby so crowded and noisy, it was a thrill to be in the temple and see the happiness in the faces of those waiting for other family members who were being married that morning. I'm sure the Lord is pleased that his saints value the blessings available in the temple and make the effort to avail themselves of those blessings.

It was a sweet experience to participate in the events of the morning and to have so many of you children present for the sealing. Camille looked like a cute little angel with her long, flowing white dress and beautiful bonnet. We've enjoyed having John, Laurel, and Emma here and hope it has been a good break for them.

One of the first things I did after our crowd left for Utah was to sit and rock Baby Emma. She is such a content and beautiful little girl and responds with a ready smile to all our antics and affection.

John and Mike both have to return to Provo to work next week so we're enjoying the chance to be together for a few days without the stresses of homework and work.

Saturday at Becky and Chet's, we took pictures of the four babies sitting together on the floor. Although it was somewhat of a challenge to keep all four of them sitting together and smiling for the picture, I'm sure it will be a fun memory. We missed Joseph, though, and hope the next time around we will have him join the group.

I was thrilled to hear the news of David and Andrea's possible transfer to Arizona. Although it is still a long drive to Tucson, it isn't nearly as far as Texas and any move to get them a little closer is a welcomed one. I know they are still deliberating and our prayers are for them in this important decision.

Well, I better get going on some Christmas baking. Last night John and Laurel spent the evening and night with Becky and Chet and they are helping her with cookies this morning and will be returning in a few hours. It has been nice to have Becky and Chet so close and they are always such gracious hostesses. We pray that the holidays will be a time of rejoicing and gratitude for each of you. It's nice to take a few minutes in the midst of the harried pace of the season and contemplate the gift of the Son and of his sacrifice for each of us. Several years ago as I attended a performance of the Messiah, I was impressed with the song, "Worthy Is The Lamb". For me that song was the climax of the whole presentation and Handel wrote the music to portray the Savior's majesty as well as his triumph in overcoming the sins of this world and being prepared to perform the Atonement. The song came with great force into my being that

night and I felt again the Holy Ghost's witness to me that Jesus is truly the Christ and that he was able to give the gift of eternal life as well as immortality because of his sinless and perfect life. How grateful I am for His goodness, his example and service, and especially of his unfailing love for us all. Have a Merry Christmas. We look forward to our missionary phone call and the chance to visit with Paul.

December 22, 1998

[Dad] Last Thursday I borrowed a Santa suit from a friend of mine and was all dressed up for Pack Meeting. It was a lot of fun playing Santa and watching the response of the kids, even when they knew who it was in the suit.

Saturday was such a special day in the temple as we were able to witness the sealing of Camille to Randy & Shauntel for time and all eternity with all the blessings promised her as though she had been born in the covenant. What a joy it was to have eight of our kids share in that event-six of them in the temple. We enjoyed having Stephani here as well as our Utah and Idaho contingent. It was also a treat to have Gary join us in the sealing room, even on an expired recommend.

SaraKay was up sick during the night quite a bit and we were trying to make arrangements for her to stay home with a babysitter. But she was so broken-hearted, we relented and took her with us. The temple was so crowded that the kids went over to the Visitors Center to wait. It was awesome to think of the resources spent and effort by so many for a 30-second ceremony. The sealer helped to put it into perspective when he said something about that event being the beginning of eternity for that little 10-month old angel.

All the family gathered at Becky and Chet's lovely new home afterward and had a wonderful meal and time together. Thanks for them being such generous hosts and making everyone feel so welcome. There were so many young married couples with little children close to the same age. Sue and I kept thinking about how fun the reunion next year is going to be!

Last night we had our council staff Christmas party. We went to the Mountain River Ranch near Heise where we had a horse-drawn wagon ride to the big barn where they fed us prime rib steak and put on a great program. We were part

of about 200 people that were there for the night's festivities. It was really well done and thoroughly enjoyable until they had me come up on the stage as Santa traveling incognito and had a girl in red sing to me about hurrying down her chimney. Sue said most people thought I was expecting it because of how well I handled the situation—it was kind of fun but embarrassing.

A 7-year old child was drawing a picture of the Nativity. The picture was very good, including Mary, Joseph and, of course, baby Jesus. However, there was a fat man standing in the corner of the stable, that just didn't seem to fit in. When the child was asked about it, she replied, "Oh, That's Round John Virgin." Merry Christmas!!! Love, DAD

December 28, 1998

[Mom] The holidays are nearly over for another year, the dust has settled, and order is restored. Well, not entirely, but the shopping, gift-giving, candy-making, and holiday parties have slowed down a bit, thank goodness! I've spent a relaxing day today putting away some decorations, running some over-due errands and planning for the month. Mike, John and Laurel left yesterday afternoon for Provo after being with us for a week. It was hard to say good-bye. They have really brightened up our holiday, especially since most of the rest of our company left the Sunday following the sealing.

We so enjoyed getting better acquainted with both Laurel and Emma since this was the longest we have ever had with either of them. We think John is a lucky guy! Laurel is such a lovely young woman and a joy to have around! John and Mike both started work this morning in Provo and were looking forward to a few days free from the pressures of school.

Tim spent most of his holiday except Christmas Day and Sunday working at Basic American. Because he has continued his association with them with holiday work, he qualified for the year-end bonus of \$200 that was given to all employees. His good standing with the personnel manager has enabled him to pull day shifts with Sundays off. He has scheduled to work most of this week including New Year's Day and then have his weekend off. He is very resourceful and hardworking and we are proud

of him for his efforts to prepare financially for college and a mission.

Yesterday he had his interview for his Patriarchal blessing. I have been filling out scholarship forms and his application to Ricks went out last week. One by one things are getting in place for the upcoming fall. He is going to apply at Logan and ISU also in case he needs to look at those options. He and Paul are planning on being roommates for fall of '99 and are excited for that time together.

Our Christmas call from Paul was wonderful. I had a long list of college-related items that I needed to talk over with him as well as sharing with him the news from home. John, Laurel, and Mike were here to take their turns visiting with him as well as Dad, Tim, and SaraKay.

I think Mike had the hardest time dealing with the emotions of it all. Ever since he returned home last June, his emotions have been pretty tender regarding Paul and the rigors of mission life. Mike's mission and the hardships of everyday life including the poverty of the area and living conditions are very similar to what Paul is experiencing and Mike feels a lot of empathy. When Mike got off the phone, he came into the dining room where some of us were visiting and he was nearly in tears. I was touched by his deep love and concern.

This weekend we are hosting Jeannie and Scot and family who will be in the area to attend Maren's reception in Pingree. They will arrive Friday afternoon and leave early Sunday morning. I thought it would be fun to host a family dinner on Saturday prior to the reception since Karen and Jim, Scot and Jeannie, Rick and Terry, Garon and Alison, and Ryan will all be around. Becky and Chet will come as well as Steve and Bonnie. Julie Ann is getting married on January 16th in Mesa and then the family is traveling to California for a reception there. We're glad to participate in Maren's reception since we couldn't for Miken and Julie Ann's.

We appreciate all that Kathy and Dick do to include Mom and Dad on special holidays and to help them with their needs on a day-to-day basis. I think of Nate and his family and the many changes and challenges they have had this past year. From all the reports, it sounds like the family is settling in and finding their niche. I'm sure it hasn't been easy but I keep

thinking how lucky those people in Montana are to get such a strong family.

[Dad] Sunday, our sacrament meeting was on the subject of Joseph Smith. The "Moreland Tabernacle Choir" sang "The First Vision" with John and Mike's help and did a pretty respectable job. It was also a fortuitous set of circumstances that ended up with Tim, Mike and me at the sacrament table together. We enjoyed sharing that spiritual experience and had many comments from members of the ward as to how special that was.

January 4, 1999

[Mom] It's like spring outside today. The rains over the weekend made short work of our snow and the roads are clear. Daddy has faithfully kept the fire going these past few weeks and it has made the house toasty and warm despite the cold weather. There isn't a day that goes by that I'm not grateful for our warm and comfortable home.

This past weekend we enjoyed having Jeannie and Scott and family here with us. They arrived Friday late afternoon and the kids played and watched videos while we adults had a wonderful visit.

Saturday we hosted a dinner for the Larsen side of the family before going to the reception. We missed Karen and Jim who weren't able to get here until later, but we had a visit with them at the reception. It's amazing to see how the grandchildren have grown. It was sweet to see Ryan and Garon and his family at the reception. Ryan looks good and had such a good spirit about him.

Just seeing Ryan made me homesick for Paul. I'm sure these last 8 months will fly by. I had an encouraging conversation with a member of the admissions committee last week at Ricks. I phoned to see if Tim's application was complete and the fellow I spoke to reassured me that it was. I inquired regarding housing and he said that housing was going to be a little tighter this year and that we should be lining something up in the next few weeks. I asked regarding their timetable on notifying students of whether they got accepted and expressed my hesitation at putting a housing deposit down before notification of acceptance. He pulled up Tim's file, checked his stats and ACT score. He explained to me that Ricks bases their acceptance 60% on endorsements and 40% on academics. He said that Tim's endorsements from teachers and religious leaders had come in at 100%. He said that it was very unusual for a student to get that high of a score; he would be very surprised if Tim didn't get accepted. I shared that conversation with Tim and he about did cartwheels!

[Dad] I just want to echo Sue regarding the satisfaction of having family around last week. Jeanie and Scott have always been such kindred spirits with our family-Bethany and SaraKay

played together and Jeremy and David stuck like glue to Tim.

On New Year's Eve, Sue chaperoned the youth dance, so SaraKay and I played games and watched TV. We experienced a rich outpouring of the Spirit in our ward meetings Sunday. Bishop Godfrey began it as he expressed his appreciation to the ward and especially to his counselor, Clark Wray, for all the visits, prayers, and tokens of love and support over the past couple of months as he has undergone his Chemo and radiation treatments and surgery for colon cancer. In Sunday School class, Farrell Wray opened it up for expressions that had affirmed the Savior's knowing and loving individuals in the class and there were many choice experiences shared. We also found out that Claudia Wray and Jan Wray have been diagnosed with cancer.

January 18, 1999

[Dad] We had a great family home evening tonight as we talked about the significance of the sealing of Camille to Randy and Shaunnie, the significance of the sealing ordinance when we are married in the temple, and the importance of connecting the chain of generations. One of the quotes from Brigham is as follows:

"Parents, teach your children by precept and example, the importance of addressing the Throne of grace; teach them how to live, how to draw from the elements the necessities of life, and teach them the laws of life that they may know how to preserve themselves in health and be able to minister to others. And when instructing them in the principles of the Gospel, teach them that they are true, truth sent down from heaven for our salvation, and that the Gospel incorporates every truth whether in heaven, in earth, or in hell; and teach them, too, that we hold the keys of eternal life, and that they must obey and observe the ordinances and laws pertaining to this holy Priesthood, which God has revealed and restored for the exaltation of the children of men."

We also reviewed part of Elder L. Tom Perry's conference talk when he said: "The eternal family is central to the gospel of our Savior. There would be no reason for Him to return to earth to rule and reign over His kingdom unless the eternal family unit has been established for our Father in Heaven's children. When we

understand the eternal role of the family, the nourishing and developing of strong family ties take on even greater significanceLearning to appreciate what it means to belong to an eternal family is of great importance to us. Remember, you are part of that eternal unit that requires your best effort. Be certain you bring warmth, kindness, understanding, consideration, and a strong love to your eternal family."

On Friday, the stake executive secretary called to ask if our family could present a musical number for stake priesthood meeting. So, the four of us sang, "Love at Home." Much of the rest of the meeting was devoted to a family improvement effort we are making to prepare for a "King Benjamin Encampment" to be held in July for the whole stake.

Last week Sue was gone Tuesday through Friday to help her parents in Salt Lake; her mother was having a hernia operation.

[Mom] It was a memorable week for me in Salt Lake taking care of Grandpa and Grandma Richards. I arrived on Tuesday about three and left to come home about four on Friday afternoon. Mom's surgery was on Wednesday and Kathy was able to get off work to take her in and bring her home that evening. The doctor said everything went well and that Mom could expect to be back to normal in a couple of weeks. I was able to get some dusting and vacuuming done and a few cleaning jobs.

The nicest part of my stay was the chance for some good one-on-one talks with Dad and Mom. It's been a long time since I've had the luxury of that kind of intimate visit, especially with Dad. We talked about his sister, Dee's, funeral and about his other siblings and reminisced about his parents and some of his memories of growing up in West Jordan. We talked about Pakistan and his two missions and his church service in years past. We also talked about his frustrations with his present situation and how hard it is to give up driving privileges. He mentioned how he misses the involvement in church and community and the opportunity to contribute to the ward. One morning I read the newspaper to him and we discussed the problems Salt Lake is having with their Olympic committee. He can't read now because of an eye condition and yet he still wants to keep abreast of what's happening in the world. It was

good for me to see life through his eyes for a few days and to renew my appreciation for many of life's small pleasures that I take for granted each day. It was sweet to share those times with Dad. I admire him for his patience and perseverance.

Mom and I also had some wonderful talks and she expressed her concerns regarding her ability to continue to give Daddy the help he needs. Although Daddy can do many things for himself, there are still certain tasks that he needs help with and she wants to be the one to give that care for as long as she is able. It was interesting to me that one of their primary concerns during the times ahead is that they keep their relationship as sweet as it has been over the last 53 years of marriage. They both expressed that hope to me and I was touched by their continuing commitment to their marriage and their love for each other.

I appreciated Daddy being Mr. Mom for a few days. Saturday, we went to Tim's Jazz game and Dad spent the day in Idaho Falls interviewing prospective camp personnel.

Yesterday Tim participated in the annual Business Professionals of America competition. He had prepared a resume and he was judged on his resume and a job interview in front of a panel of three. He had such good vibes from the panel that he hoped he would place in the event, but when all was said and done, he placed in two other areas but not in the interview area. He found out later that although his interview was "flawless", 30% of the judging was based on the resume and that must have been his weak spot. He will be competing at state in the other two areas in March. He wore a pin stripe suit, complete with a folded hankie in the pocket, spit shined shoes, deep blue shirt and snazzy tie and the two women interviewers commented that he looked "immaculate". He had taken Dad's old cellular phone and attached it to his suit and walked around the school pretending to be talking on it. He also had some sunglasses that completed his outfit. Luckily Daddy and I had convinced him that his phone and glasses should be left behind during the interview.

We grilled him on a wide variety of questions for about an hour and got him thinking about what kinds of questions he might get asked and what kind of answers would represent him and his

qualifications for the job. He said that several of the things we had questioned him on were asked in the interview and he felt good about his responses. When the panel looked over his long list of work experiences including his mowing business, pallet building, spud harvest, and time at Basic American, the one member said she would like to offer him a job at the INEEL. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and opportunity to learn a little more about selling himself. We asked him if he happened to mention his "Max Office Supplies" Rebate business but he only grinned and said he thought it wise to not "go there".

Tonight is our "New Beginnings" and I've been making chicken salad, Russian tea cakes, and typing up the program. Tuesday is always a wild day for me but very satisfying when all our efforts pay off.

January 25, 1999

[Mom] It's a winter wonderland outside. Friday night a storm moved in and before it was over, we had several inches of wet, heavy snow. Tim and his friends left last Thursday to attend a weekend "Fun Day" at Utah State and he was supposed to return home on Saturday in time for his Jazz game but when we got up and looked outside, we wondered if they would attempt it. About 11 a.m. Daddy, SaraKay, and I bundled up and went outside to clear away enough of the snow from the driveway so that we could get out with the car. We knew Daddy's four-wheel drive pick-up would be able to manage, but we knew my Pontiac wouldn't. We started shoveling the sidewalk and then started on the driveway. Soon the Hanni's arrived with shovels in hand, and we made short work of it.

As we were finishing up, Tim arrived home. We were relieved to get him home safely and we all made a quick dash to get him to his game on time. Today Brent Young came over and cleared out our driveway a little more; he is such a sweet neighbor.

The news from Salt Lake is good. Mom is on the mend. I was hoping to go to Salt Lake with Daddy this week when he went to Provo for "Career Day" to recruit some students for help at scout camp, but he had the "Trails" handed to him last week with a plea to finish it up so our plans have been delayed. The fellow who was in charge of the quarterly "Trails" resigned last week and his responsibilities were reassigned.

Daddy was asked to get the paper done; it has been the usual frustrating experience.

I was anxious to visit with Mike since I've known he had a girl he was interested in. I was hoping that Daddy would have a chance to meet her this weekend when he made his trip to Provo, but now that his trip is on "hold", we have to wait another week. Her name is Julie and she is from Beaverton, Oregon. She is the third of six children and is a senior, majoring in accounting. She plays the piano and sings and has many of the same interests as Mike. He says they share the same feelings for the gospel and that she brings out the best in him. They had a date to the temple last week and were asked to be the witness couple.

We were pleased to get Paul's letters and news about being a Zone Leader. He has always enjoyed being the follower and supporter so whenever these opportunities come, he's surprised.

[Dad] As I have gotten older and mellowed out a little and have become more patient and more communicative, the relationship I have with your mother has deepened and mellowed. I cherish the times we have together and the talks and feelings we are able to share. We never grow tired of each other-in fact quite the opposite is true!

It was fun to watch Tim's Jazz team play ball on Saturday. They are such talented and athletic young men. The team they were playing stayed right with them for the first quarter and then it seemed like they weren't hardly in the game after that and Tim's team kept adding to their lead. There was one fast break where the ball was so far in front of Tim, I didn't think he would make it, but he did and made the layup.

February 2, 1999

[Mom] Daddy has been busy making decisions and interviewing people for his Island Park Scout camp staff the last few weeks as well as keeping up with the endowment responsibilities.

Saturday Daddy was interviewing youth for the camp positions and when he got home about two, he went into the bedroom to get out of his scout uniform and don more appropriate attire for Tim's basketball game at three. Since we hadn't had much time to visit for several days, I followed him into the bedroom and sat on the bed while he changed clothes. We visited about

the different people he was lining up for camp and almost as an afterthought he said to me, "Does one of my calves look bigger than the other?" I looked down at his legs and was alarmed to see that one was swollen and red. He said that lately it had been bothering him a little and that the left leg seemed enlarged and tight. I went right to the phone and called the medical clinic and made an appointment for him.

He thought I was over reacting, but I was worried about phlebitis (a blood clot in the leg) and I knew that it can be dangerous. I knew that if left untreated the clot can move into the heart, brain, or lungs and prove fatal. I insisted that Daddy go to the appointment and meet us at the game later if the doctor thought it was safe for him to be on his leg. I went to the game and about 3:30 Daddy arrived with the news that it probably was phlebitis and that the technician wasn't working on Saturday but that he was scheduled for an ultra-sound on Monday afternoon. He was supposed to spend the next few days in a prone position and use a heating pad on the infected leg and take aspirin to thin the blood.

It was nice to have the weekend to keep off the leg and not be stressed about appointments, but we both knew that Monday morning was going to arrive complete with volunteers and deadlines for getting the paper to the post office. Sunday night Daddy called his boss and informed him of the problem and that we would be at the office at 8 the next morning. I arranged my day so as to spend the day with Daddy and we left here at 7:30 a.m. complete with heating pad, pillow, blanket, and other paraphernalia to use to prop up Daddy's leg while we worked.

When we got to Idaho Falls, I did the running and Daddy sat and supervised, sorted the completed bundles, and did what he could from a sitting position. His boss was holding a staff meeting that morning and all the professionals came in and worked for the first half hour and got us off to a good start. We had 15 volunteers from the Idaho Falls RSVP Club there to help for nearly four hours, but we still were quite a ways from being finished when Daddy and I had to leave for Daddy's ultra-sound appointment. Luckily the other scouts came after their morning meetings and finished it up. Kim assigned someone to load and haul the boxes to

the Pocatello Post Office and complete the process. a

When Daddy had his exam, he had blood clots from his groin area to his ankle! He has been put on medication that he will need to take for about the next three months and he has to go in again in two days to see if his blood is thinning out and the danger is past. Meanwhile, he is lying on the bed or in his reclining chair and trying to stay calm and quiet. He's reading, talking on the phone, and doing anything else that he can do in a prone position.

Sunday Becky and Chet invited us to attend their ward sacrament meeting since they had been asked to present the program. Although Daddy wasn't able to attend, Tim, SaraKay, and I went. It was a beautiful meeting although I spent most of it walking with Madison in the back of the chapel. The minute Becky got up to speak, Madison recognized her voice and she wasn't happy. I took her back to the overflow area and walked with her long enough to get through the meeting. At one point we even let her chew on a National Geographic in the diaper bag after losing her pacifier. When the sacrament was passed, I mouthed the words, "Don't let her grab the water tray!" Tim knew I was trying to tell him something but he couldn't read my lips so he leaned forward to ask me what I had said and Madison reached out and grabbed about four cups and dumped them all onto Tim's lap. SaraKay started giggling and I was frantically trying to get the tray from Madison. Amazing how an eight-month-old baby can have the grip of an adult!

Tim's church and Jazz teams are awesome! Saturday they made 97 points in the church game and they beat their opponents in the Jazz game by about 35 points. It's so fun to see the team play together. It is the same bunch of boys that have played ball together for the last five years and this is the final year they will be together.

[Dad] I am feeling well and being a good boy and doing what the doctor told me to do. One of the options was to immediately go into the hospital and be put on a heparin IV for two days while the rat poison builds up to the desired level. The option that I elected was to go home, keep my leg elevated and on a heat pad or hot bath. On Thursday, I go in to have some lab tests done to determine if the Coumadin level

has increased my clotting time by 50%. At that level, I just have to be careful not to cut myself or do anything that will cause bleeding. It will take several months to dissolve the clot.

I have been reading "Counseling With Our Councils" by M. Russell Ballard. What a wonderful book! I think it should be mandatory reading for all members of Church presidencies or councils. One of the key thoughts he builds on is using the inspiration and experience of women that are in our ward and stake Councils. He quotes from President Boyd K. Packer on the need for faithful and inspired women to make their influence felt within the Church: *'We need women who will applaud decency and quality in everything from the fashion of clothing to crucial social issues. We need women who are organized and who can organize. We need women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer; women who can teach, women who can speak out. There is a great need for women who can receive inspiration to guide them personally in their teaching and in their leadership responsibilities. We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous. We need women who can discern those positions that may not be popular at all, but are right.'* As I read that quote, I thought how the women in this family reach up to that standard and are so amply qualified to lead, organize, direct, administer, teach and discern. How blessed I am to be sealed to a woman so qualified and respected for her insights and abilities in the councils she operates in—from the family to the ward, stake, school board, etc.

February 9, 1999

[Dad] Sunday was a great loss for the young women of our ward as Sue was released. Most of her organization was ready for the change, having served for three years with a great deal of intensity and long hours of attention.

Sunday night was our stake standards night and the speaker was an Ob-gyn doctor from Pocatello: Kim Cox. He did an excellent job and addressed in a very frank and open way many of the issues we felt have been skirted in previous standards nights.

Saturday night we had the annual recognition dinner at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake for the council and professional

scouters who had reached the membership and fund-raising goals for the previous year. It was a delicious buffet and good program. We left early so that we could visit with Sue's folks and take care of a couple errands for them.

Late Friday night Mike and Julie arrived and we had a delightful visit with them while Mike got his hair cut. She is a lovely girl and we were certainly impressed with her. Our only regret was that we didn't get more time with them. They went to the temple for Brandon's wedding on Saturday morning, visited with Becky & Madison (Chet was entertaining in Jackson), came back for Tim's Jazz game at noon, and were here all afternoon (including a visit to the farm and Gary's cellar full of potatoes).

I spent a couple days last week just lying around with my leg elevated and a heat pad under it. By Thursday afternoon my clotting time had only increased from 12 to 12.8 and the doctor said we needed to double my dosage. I don't think he realized how big a rat he was dealing with. By yesterday afternoon it was up to 13.7 with 18 as the target, so I still have a ways to go. I have felt pretty good and have put in a couple of full days of work. But I can tell the sensitivity in my leg if I do too much.

[Mom] Mike and Julie's visit has to be the front-page article with many of you anxiously awaiting our report. After last week's letter informing you of their upcoming visit, I received phone calls from nearly everyone inquiring as to the status of the relationship. As Daddy related to you, our share of their visit was way too rushed and short. They had agreed to bring a BYU student from Chile with them for some people in Idaho Falls and the details of where to meet and when got messed up and so they waited at the McDonalds in Blackfoot for nearly 45 minutes for the Idaho Falls connection and finally found out that the other people were waiting at a different McDonalds. It delayed them getting here and so we were cutting hair and doing laundry and trying to get in some quality visiting until after midnight.

Saturday morning Mike and Julie had to be in the temple by nine and we had to leave for Salt Lake by 9:30. The up side of the day was that after they attended Brandon's wedding, they went to see Becky and then all of them went to Tim's Jazz game and had pizza together. When we called home about 6 pm before the scout

dinner, they were leaving for Provo after a fun day together.

For those of you who haven't met Julie, let me describe her. She is a pretty brunette, about 5'8" tall and slender. She was raised in Beaverton, Oregon and is in her senior year at the Y. She is majoring in accounting and presently is job hunting since she will graduate in April. She is vivacious and straight-forward, an early riser, and according to Mike, has a long list of suitors. When Mike called on Sunday we both asked each other the same question. "Well?" I told Mike that the phone was already ringing with siblings wanting the low-down on the Provo romance.

(Mike)"Tell them, "Things went well!" So consider yourselves told and now you know as much as we do. Certainly the advice from this quarter is "all systems go!" but we know that this life-altering, earth-shaking, eternally significant, amazingly exciting decision can only be made by the two people involved so despite our overwhelming, loving, and reassuring support, we are willing to be patient until the two of them make up their own minds about whether I should order another T-shirt for the family reunion in August!

Just one bit of advice that I received from John and Laurel when they called. John asked if Mike had kissed her yet and I told him that I certainly hoped so and then John said that he thought Mike should kiss her more and that would help speed things along. I told John that I had an unwritten policy that I never asked my kids if they had gotten kissed and Laurel said that she would ask Mike and then I told Laurel that she should call me "collect" with that information. It's wonderful having such cooperation from you other siblings and in-laws!

Second newsworthy item: I got released Sunday and I am feeling tremendously relieved and light. I know I will miss the girls and the sweet association with my YW leaders, but I was ready. I have few regrets of my time as President and feel like the Lord knows I gave it my best efforts. I've certainly got some wonderful memories of Pioneer Trek, Girls Camp, and of the choice friendships with the YW of our ward! I will be leaving in a few minutes for Boise for a Legislative "Day on the Hill" for all school board members in Idaho so I better wrap this up. This is my last official trip with the Board

and I'm feeling a little nostalgic about it. I appreciate Daddy coming along to do the driving and sharing in the fun. We will be meeting tomorrow with Jerry Twiggs (Senate ProTem from our area) and then we will be having lunch tomorrow with Dennis Lake and Stanley Williams. That should be fun for Daddy since he has been good friends with both men and they have a lot of mutual respect.

Daddy continues to recover although it is going to be a several months proposition and he can tell that he isn't 100% yet. We have been asked to present the program for the adult Valentine's Dance this Saturday and we are singing some love songs together. It's been fun to get ready for that. Daddy is also playing a trumpet solo and I know it will be a big hit. Tim is on the road to graduation (May 27). Dave and Andrea are due to be in Tucson on May 1st and have made an offer on a home with a pool.

February 15, 1999

[Mom] We've enjoyed a quiet holiday today. Daddy's spent the day sitting or lying with his leg elevated working on our tax return. It's nice to get it done for another year even if it's been forced upon him by his immobility. He has been taking triple doses of the blood thinner the doctor ordered but last Thursday his leg was so swollen and discolored that it alarmed us both. Progress has been slow and he's been discouraged.

I was scheduled to go to Boise last week for our legislative tour and Daddy came along. We had a nice trip but upon returning he was told by the doctor that the lack of movement while traveling is probably one of the hardest things for his problem. We both committed to a quiet weekend. Yesterday we could see a noticeable improvement in the coloring and swelling. With all the pressures of camp, it's hard to be limited in what he can do.

I've spent part of today working on some ideas for my new church job, Primary Chorister. I visited the Primary yesterday and observed and came away wondering if I am too old for this. The children were noisy and disrespectful and I wondered if they were having a bad day because of all the changes that had taken place. Later one of the teachers caught me in the hall and said that he hoped I would be able to effect a change in the reverence. He

commented that it was better today than it had been in a long time! That blew me away!

Tim had an interview this afternoon with a Wal-Mart manager for their scholarship. He was one of five finalists representing the five Bingham County high schools. He said he couldn't really tell how it went and so he wasn't too optimistic about his chances. He spent the morning lining up appointments with apartment managers in Rexburg. He and Chad Christensen are going to go to Ricks on Wednesday.

Saturday night was our stake Valentine's dance. We wouldn't have even gone if we hadn't committed to provide the entertainment for the intermission. We had practiced a medley of love songs with Janet Williams, our accompanist, and Daddy was prepared to play his trumpet solo, "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White". I had worried about the assignment since the day that we were asked and I had tried in vain to get another couple to sing with us since I have had problems lately singing in small groups. Everyone I called had other plans and so Daddy and I forged ahead. When Saturday night arrived, we went to the dance late so that we wouldn't have to dance and we didn't have a chance to try out the microphones that the DJ's were using although it was obviously a wonderful system. When Daddy played his trumpet solo, it filled the whole gym and was absolutely breathtaking. I could feel the delight of everyone as well as the surprise since many of them didn't have any idea that he could even play the trumpet.

Our medley was next and we each had our own microphone. We had the music on a music stand in front of us thinking that it would work well to have it stationary instead of being held by one of us. I should have made sure I could see it before we began but as we started into the song, I realized that the combination of the irregular lighting and my bifocals was creating shadows on the music and I began fumbling with the music to try to get it to where I could see it better. Add that unnerving predicament to my inexperience singing on separate microphones and I nearly came unglued. The sound of my voice booming over the sound system filled me with such trepidation that I lost all sense of pitch and stumbled to harmonize on even some of the simple passages.

[Dad] It seems great to finally feel like I am making some progress with the blood clots in my leg. After taking it easy, keeping it elevated and heat on it for the past several days, it is closer to normal than it has been for several weeks.

One of the high points of last week was having Staff and Chris drop in for a visit. They were on their way back home after picking up a Jeep that they left at Oiley's (my cousin Kevin). They were hauling it back on a trailer and I imagine Chris is going to be working on it-he is taking classes and doing some work in automotive mechanics. They had been to visit Gary and Linda and were going to stop at Rick and Terry's on the way. Coco and Jim seem to be doing great on their missions. Their business is doing well, but most of Staff's work is in Las Vegas, which is about two hours away from Washington so they are probably going to move back there in a couple of months.

The lesson from Brigham Young Sunday was about cultivating humility, gratitude, and honesty. He said, 'We have to humble ourselves and become like little children in our feelings, to become humble and childlike in spirit, in order to receive the first illuminations of the spirit of the Gospel, then we have the privilege of growing, of increasing in knowledge, in wisdom, and in understanding.'

February 20, 1999

[Mom] We had an incident yesterday that left me in awe. Last Sunday, when Daddy returned from a cub scout committee meeting, we sat down to eat dinner and he began to relate a conversation he had just had with Sharon Wolfe, a new member of our ward. Her daughter, Kristi, who is a sophomore at Snake River High School, told her some disturbing things regarding a student in several of her classes. Kristi was in two vo-tech classes with a boy who had spent some time at State Hospital South last year. He was very vocal and had on numerous occasions recounted to his classmates all the details of the shootings in the schools across the nation. He had even said that someday he was going to "blow away" the students at Snake River in a similar manner, only he was going to "take out" more students than any other gunman had. Kristi chastised him for even thinking such things and encouraged him to act responsibly and consider the devastating effect it would

have on everyone involved. Apparently, most of the students involved in these discussions just ignored him but Kristi continued to take him to task for his threats. Her reaction created hostility between them and his threats began to target her more specifically.

On Friday of last week, Kristi didn't go to school and word got to her through her friends that this boy was making threats on her life. She told her mother and they called the Blackfoot police and an officer visited their home and discussed the situation with them. He basically told them that until something happened, the police's hands were tied.

Sunday at the Cub meeting, Sharon mentioned her concerns to Daddy and he alerted me to the situation. We were surprised to find that even Tim was aware of this student and had on occasion heard him say "off-the-wall" things. Because of his past history of mental illness, the kids pretty much discounted what he said.

The longer we discussed it, the more Daddy and I felt like this was a potentially volatile situation and that I should tell Elzo White. Sharon called me on Monday with further details. She rehearsed with me most of the things she had told Daddy. The threats on Kristi's life were targeted for the next day and she was hesitant to let her go to school.

Like many of you, I have followed the stories of the school shootings these past years. In almost every case, there had been warning signs given by the perpetrators, but no one took them seriously. If it was a case of harassment involving other students and if the school personnel had been notified and failed to act, there were serious legal implications for the district. In many such cases, the parents eventually went to the courts for satisfaction and the districts were found negligent and liable. I have learned over the last three years that everything the district does has to be justified legally and we have a superstructure of local and state lawyers who we consult before acting in matters of hiring, firing, suspensions, harassments, and so forth. I knew that for me to receive such information and not take it to Elzo could eventually put the district in legal jeopardy if something did occur and we had been alerted but had done nothing.

Despite the fact that Monday was a holiday, I called Elzo and informed him of the situation.

He was unaware of it and he said that he would do some phoning and get to the bottom of it. He said that he would call Sharon and then notify the school personnel who dealt with these situations. Tuesday morning I received another call from Sharon, wondering if I had called Elzo and if so, what he had said. I assured her that I had and that he was doing the necessary checking with the school. I then called Elzo again and he assured me that he had visited with the high school principal and that they were taking the necessary precautions. Apparently after they checked into the situation it was discovered that this student's parents had been out of town for several days and that the special education teacher in charge of this student had been absent from school and the boy was struggling because most of his support group hadn't been there with him. Nothing happened Tuesday and we all hoped that the whole thing would go away.

Yesterday morning I received a phone call from Elzo. He was calling to inform me before I heard the news through the "rumor mill" that Thursday morning a few students had approached the resource officer with the information that they thought the student had a weapon in his backpack. Because of being alerted by Sharon, the resource officer and Mr. Thompson immediately searched the boy's backpack whereupon they discovered a loaded 22 pistol, several loaded gun clips, a knife, and other weapons. They immediately got the student out of class, called the police, and he was taken into custody.

I haven't been able to quit thinking about it and how grateful I am that events transpired to protect the students at the high school. My heart goes out to the parents of this student. They are fine people and I'm sure their hearts are heavy. How grateful I am that a concerned mother stepped forward with information and alerted the authorities and they were ready to handle it.

Other news of the week is less sensational but worth mentioning. Daddy continues to take the medications for his phlebitis and this morning he went in to the clinic for a blood test and his clotting time has reached the desired levels. His leg is definitely less swollen and red and he spent part of the weekend doing some projects for me around the house. He can tell when he needs to get off his feet and he rested off and

on throughout the day Saturday. One project he completed was getting some shelves in the computer room built. I have been trying to get our family records sorted and organized including scrapbooks, photo albums, and genealogy.

I have nearly completed a photo album for each of you children and mounted them in acid-free, archival quality page protectors. I have included all the photos each of you have sent to me over the years as well as sorting through many of my own photo collection and placing them in the appropriate album. It has been a mammoth task and I am not quite through but I am getting close. The last time I visited with my mother in Salt Lake she gave me a small metal container with over 400 slides. Two hundred of them are of their trip to Pakistan, but the others are of our family when you older siblings were small. It is a treasure trove. I borrowed Mother's viewer and I have been going through them but when I called to see what it would cost to have them made into prints, I was told it would be \$1 a piece a print so I have put the project aside until I complete the projects I am working on for our upcoming reunion.

Daddy has already accused me of biting off more than I can chew and some days I think he is right. Wednesday Tim and I went to Rexburg and got him his housing for fall. One of his friends, Chad Christensen, and his mother went with us and we had made appointments to view the apartments so we were able to quite quickly evaluate what was available within our price range. It always makes me a bit nervous choosing housing for others who are not present to voice their opinions, but I had previously visited with Paul's old roommates' mothers and they told me to move ahead and they would go with what we agreed upon.

It seems that there is still uncertainty regarding the returned missionaries and just what they will eventually end up doing but I mailed them their contracts and it is in their hands now. Most of Paul's friends will be returning in early summer so I figure if they don't like what we chose, they will have time to find something else. As for Paul, he is going to come flying in the end of August and hardly have time to unpack before he leaves for college. I'm glad he'll be a little closer to home so that we can sneak a visit every now and then.

[Dad] It has been encouraging to finally get my "Protime", a measure of my blood clotting time, up to where the doctor felt it should be to minimize the danger of clots hitting vital organs and allow the clots in my leg to dissolve. Much of the swelling is gone and almost all of the discoloration. We are feeling very encouraged with the progress.

I was able to get a lot of projects completed on Saturday. It was good to feel good enough about my leg to tackle some more physically demanding projects. This whole experience has really brought home to me an appreciation for good health and empathy for others who have limitations.

Much of my work time has been spent on camp lately. One of the biggest jobs is recruiting and hiring a staff of about 50+ people. There is a range of needs, from 14- and 15-year-olds willing to work for two or three weeks for nothing but the experience; to 16-18-year olds as instructors; to 21-year-olds or older to be directors over different areas of camp, commissioners, or various business-related positions.

March 1999

[Mom] It is nice to get Paul's letters each week; we can't help but be grateful that he has had good health and hard-working companions.

Tim found out that he was first runner-up for the Wal-Mart scholarship which was a boost to his ego but which didn't do much for his bank account. He has been investing some of his savings in the stock market the last few months and hopes that he can see some profit from that. The first thing he does when he gets home from school is check the stock market report on the internet to see if he's made or lost money that day.

I spent last Friday with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. They are doing quite well although life certainly has its challenges for them. They continue to meet each day with a smile. Mother has been giving me a lot of journals, photos, and other memorabilia that she has sorted through and needs to dispose of. I have their missionary journals from San Francisco and Peru, their journals from their stay in Pakistan, over 400 slides from their life and travels, and an envelope full of family pictures that Daddy has taken over the years. Mom is trying to clear

away things so that she can devote herself to doing her genealogical research now and so I am the "keeper of the records" I guess. Eventually I would like to get all the information on disk and submit it to the BYU Library. I've felt a little like Moroni when Mormon handed him the records with the injunction to preserve and continue.

[Dad] John sent me his "TurboTax" disk and I got started on putting together our tax return with it tonight. It is an interesting process and way of doing one's taxes and I think it is going to help me get things done quicker than it would have been otherwise. I spent too much time on my feet last Thursday and Friday and had a bit of a relapse with my leg. After taking it easy over the weekend, I am pretty much back in line.

As we watched Tim's church ball team and Jazz team play on Saturday, it was a thrill. They play so well together and are so unselfish with the ball; sometimes they go the length of the floor with three or four team members having touched the ball and it hasn't touched the floor.

Friday night was our Blue and Gold dinner. We had soup and sandwiches and had a great turnout, nearly 100% of our cubs and their families-about 100 people. Tim and his quartet sang three songs for us, including "In the Jungle" and everyone was impressed with them. (They did an even more awesome job on Sunday as they sang the special # for sacrament meeting!) After presenting the awards, I played a jazzy trumpet version of "Look for the Bare Necessities" and then sang it and had all the cubs come up and join in before I would give them their Scout Month patches and segments. We had a great time. We have a couple of nonmember boys that are a part of our pack. One of them, Chris Rodriquez, had his mother there for the first time that I remember. There was a Hispanic neighbor of theirs with two sons who wanted to join in also. Everyone did a great job of fellowshiping them and I think they really felt welcome.

Let me share a couple of thoughts with you. In view of last week's letter about the gun at school I thought you would appreciate this quote from Al Capone: "You can go a long way with a smile. You can go a lot farther with a smile and a gun." Franklin P. Jones said: "The trouble with being punctual is that nobody's there to appreciate it." "The reason grandparents and

grandchildren get along so well is that they have a common enemy." "USA Today has come out with a new survey-apparently, three out of every four people make up 75% of the population." (David Letterman) "The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that you've got it made." "I told the doctor I broke my leg in two places. He told me to quit going to those places." "I have enough money to last me the rest of my life, unless I buy something."

March 9, 1999

[Dad] Yesterday was an emotionally tumultuous day because we found out that the doctor wanted to schedule Sue for surgery this week for possible ovarian cancer. She went in last week for her annual physical exam. The Doctor said one of her ovaries seemed a little enlarged and scheduled her for an ultra-sound. The ultra-sound showed a chambered cyst that could be cancerous. He wanted to schedule her for surgery as soon as possible and with a speaking assignment on Thursday night, that meant Friday. Perhaps you would like to join us in fasting that morning. We will keep you informed of any further developments as we learn of them.

Last weekend was a Bingham Youth Jazz All Star invitational BB tournament. Tim and four others from our ward were 1/2 of one of the teams. They beat a team from Evanston, Wyoming and a Blackfoot team on Friday night and then had to beat two Blackfoot teams on Saturday to win the championship and get individual medals. It was fun to watch them play! I am so proud of Tim and the mature way he handles himself. I am always amazed at the athleticism of these young men.

Saturday night I went to Rexburg for the Wood Badge beading ceremony for the first person from my course to complete his ticket. He is a fine young man who has had his vision of Scouting expanded because of the Wood Badge experience and has enjoyed serving as a Varsity Scout Coach.

Friday night I went to Bancroft, spent some time with my Program Director for camp and interviewed three outstanding young men for camp staff. It is reassuring to find such fine young men from my interviews. Last Wednesday I spent the day at a Job Fair at Ricks College recruiting prospects also.

[Mom] I realize that by the time Paul gets this letter, the suspense of whether I have cancer or not will be over and so I almost hesitate sending it since I hate to have him worrying about it when it may be a benign tumor and easily remedied. I am grateful for my commitment to my annual physical which is recommended for women once they reach 50. I have not been sick and haven't had any pain in my abdomen so I wouldn't have suspected that I had a problem if I hadn't gone in for my check-up.

When Dr. Petersen completed the exam, he told me that he was going to schedule me for an ultra-sound and I questioned him on that since it isn't normal procedure. He had detected an enlarged ovary and wanted to see what was going on. Following my ultra-sound on Friday, I went home and didn't give a lot of thought to hearing from him since the results of these tests are frequently mailed out in the week following the test. Monday as I was walking with Janet and Robyn, I mentioned that I hadn't heard from Dr. Peterson and they both felt like I ought to phone him.

I tried when I returned from walking and left my inquiry on his voice mail. I had a multitude of things to do and was in and out all day with violin lessons and other errands. When I returned about 3:30 I called again and his nurse said that he had been trying to reach me over the weekend. That made me a little nervous. When he came to the phone he said that the ultra-sound didn't look good and that he wanted to schedule me for surgery Wednesday or Thursday.

I told him that I was booked this week but that my schedule would open up the first week in April. He let me know that that wasn't an option and that I needed to have the ovary removed immediately. By the time I got off the phone we had agreed to Friday morning and I called Daddy with the news. I was in the middle of all my preparations for the big dinner that evening and Daddy and I didn't want to have my problem the topic at the party so we agreed to carry on and share the news with the kids later.

I felt badly about having to back out on helping with Madison next week while they went on their Melaleuca trip. Dr. Peterson said that following the surgery I will have a couple months of not being able to lift anything heavy and so those plans had to be scrapped. I guess the good

news is that since I have known for several months that I was going to be babysitting I have cleared my calendar.

I have a consultation tomorrow with the doctor to see whether we want to do a full hysterectomy or just remove the ovary. Daddy and I feel like maybe if we have a choice we will have it all done so that I can get some relief from these monthly headaches, too. I suspect that once they remove the ovary, they will be able to tell what is going on and I will have Daddy call each of you with the news. I would appreciate your faith and prayers and if you would join us in fasting Friday morning, that would be great, too.

(Wednesday) I had such a busy day yesterday that I failed to get this letter transmitted so I am committed to getting this done before I leave in a few minutes to pick up Tim and take him in for a consultation on removal of his wisdom teeth the first weekend in April. He is out for spring break and although he'll be laid up for the vacation, it will be good to have it done and know he doesn't have it to deal with as a freshman at Ricks. He is leaving tomorrow for Boise and a state SPA convention. Next Tuesday he competes at District V Solo contest. It has been so hard to get time to practice and we have both felt a little shaky with the song.

Tim practices and then he goes to school and I am here alone at home with the song going through my mind a hundred times as I mentally work through the timing, the words, and the dynamics. Last night before drifting off to sleep I was still singing, "Blow High, Blow Low, Let tempest tear the main mast by the board!" I guess the up side of that is that it has kept my mind off the upcoming surgery. I am excited for Tim and the opportunity to compete. He has a really nice, mellow sound that shows well in a solo situation and his teacher has given him a lot of positive encouragement.

SaraKay went out to feed the rabbits yesterday and discovered three baby rabbits strewn around the pen. It shook her up so bad that she came in and refused to go back out without a helper. Tim then went out with her and confirmed that they were probably dead. Just to be sure we left them in the pen and I promised her I would go out with her today and check and remove them. There was fur all over the pen so it was a little hard to know just what was going

on. I tried to reassure her that first-time animal mothers sometimes lose their first litter because they haven't learned what to do and that a second time it would be better. SaraKay asked, "Who is going to teach them the second time?" Good question. (Don't you just hate these questions the kids come up with!") We'll keep you posted on the status of the rabbit population at the Larsen's. I guess we must have guessed wrong about the sex of the two bunnies we chose. Blame Daddy; he was the one we sent to get them from the Thompsons.

Next week I want to send out a wonderful letter Mike forwarded to us regarding the temple dedication in Chihuahua. Included in it is a letter he sent to his mission president while he was in the mission field and which was selected by them to be put in a packet in the cornerstone of the temple. It is his feelings about Grandma Abby and her early days in the Mormon Colonies and Mike's feeling that she would be present at the ceremonies. The letter tells of the proceedings last week at the dedication and talks given by President Hinckley, Elder Packer, and others. President Packer echoed Mike's thoughts that surely those early saints were permitted to be there with them for the dedication.

March 12, 1999

[Dad] Sue came through the surgery this morning with flying colors and the doctor said that everything looked good. Because there were no other irregularities, they only removed her one ovary. It appeared to be a swollen, blood engorged cyst. Tissue has been sent to the lab for confirmation but it didn't appear to be malignant. We are relieved and know that your faith and prayers joined with ours, and the power of the priesthood combined to result in such a positive result.

Last night, it was sweet to be able to have Gary come over and join with me in anointing and blessing Sue. We certainly felt at peace with the positive blessing we were impressed to give. I for one certainly believe in miracles and the power of the priesthood and know from whence we owe today's results. Thanks for your interest, faith, and prayers. We love you, DAD

March 16, 1999

[Mom] It's a beautiful spring day outside but I've spent the day lying on my bed sleeping, or

reading a book. It feels good to have last weekend over and know that I'm on the mend. It was such a relief to receive the news that I wasn't dealing with cancer. Thank you for all your prayers in my behalf.

When Dr. Peterson called last Monday to tell me that I needed surgery, I couldn't imagine pulling away from the commitments I had made and so I asked for a few days to finish up my appointments and prepare things at home. He said that Friday would work for him and we scheduled it for that morning. It wasn't until I finished up the Larsen home evening dinner that night that I had time to start thinking about the surgery and what it could mean for our family. Although I was grateful to have the few days to get ready, I didn't anticipate the anxiety that I would feel and that I saw manifest in various ways throughout the ensuing days.

I was especially worried that I get through school board meeting and my speaking assignment without letting my emotions get the best of me. As the week progressed, I received phone calls from nearly all of you and those were the times of strengthening for me although they were also the times I had the hardest time keeping my emotions in check. I knew that I was in your prayers and that thought brought a great deal of comfort and sweetness to the experience for me. Thursday night Uncle Gary came over and they administered to me.

Tim was gone to Boise but SaraKay was present for the blessing and I was grateful for that. She had been hovering near me most of the week and each time someone would call and the upcoming surgery was discussed, she was close at hand, absorbing it and trying to sort it out. I worried about it but didn't know how to keep her from the interaction that was so constant during those few days. Thursday night following the blessing, I followed her to her room while Daddy visited for a few minutes with Gary. It gave me a few minutes with her to express my love and give her a chance to express her concerns. The tears came and we both admitted that we were scared for the events of the day ahead. We talked about the Holy Ghost as a Comforter and how He can bring us peace even when faced with uncertainty. It was a tender moment and I was grateful for it.

I didn't have to be to the hospital until eight Friday morning, so we had time to get SaraKay

off to school without too much break in routine. Daddy had the day off and took his briefcase full of work to do and he settled in while they got me ready. My friend, Val Pincock, was the surgical assistant and it was nice having her at my side. I remember lying on the operating table but that was the last thing I remember. Later, Val told me that they question the patient while they are going under the anesthetic to tell when they are totally under. She said that Dr. Peterson asked me where I would like to go for a vacation if I could go anywhere in the world. My response was immediate. "A BYU Conference." He tried to talk me out of it, mentioning several exotic places, but my answer stayed vehemently, "A BYU Conference!" We had a good laugh about that later.

Well, I'm home now and spending most of my day on the bed. This morning I had 10 phone calls from various sources and so I won't say on the bed, sleeping, but I have tried to get the needed rest and today I am really starting to feel like I am going to live. People in the ward have been so sweet and we've had enough food brought to last the week. Of course, Tim and Daddy have been more than willing to accept it and have certainly enjoyed not having to cook. Today Tim is competing at District V Solo in Marsh Valley. Daddy was going to try to pull away for an hour from work and go see him perform. My thoughts and prayers are with him. He has prepared long and hard and is certainly deserving but it is impossible to know what he will come up against in the other schools and if he will sing his best, or hit a tough spot and forget the words. I'm anxious for a phone call telling me how it went. Linnea has been tutoring him and has been so complimentary of his voice.

March 23, 1999

[Mom] It's a blustery March day today and I'm grateful to have the excuse to stay inside and catch up from the weekend. I was able to attend my meetings yesterday and fulfill my responsibilities in Primary. I knew that I could justify staying home but I hated to miss the strength and inspiration that I receive from mingling with the saints and the formal worship service. I know that I still have several weeks ahead of taking it a little easier but as long as I can be on my feet, albeit moving a little slower, I can pretty much take care of life.

Saturday was a productive day for us even though we attended two ball games for Tim. His team begins regional play this week and they are playing for the championship of the community basketball league on Tuesday. They have had an amazing season and it has been a positive and enriching experience for all the team members. We have another week of play, to complete the regional tournament. Bob Jenks coached both the church and community teams since his two sons play and he has certainly made it a memorable experience. Several of the boys on the Jazz team are considerably younger than Tim, Shane, and Ryan and the older boys have included the younger ones and made it a growing experience for them, too. We have had several of the parents involved approach us and express appreciation for the attitude of the team members of including each boy, despite his proficiency level.

Last week Tim received word that he got a half-tuition scholarship to Ricks. We were happy to hear that and to know that his acceptance didn't have any strings attached such as a requirement to attend summer school. Tim has wanted to work again this summer and his unqualified acceptance will allow him to do that.

It has been an interesting experience to have him be a part of the "Basic American" crowd. Several times when we have been in Blackfoot he has struck up a conversation with someone who was a total stranger to me and later he has explained that it was a friend he worked with at Basic. Most of the individuals look a little unlikely and aren't people who are in his usual circle of friends but I've been proud of him for his acceptance and friendliness toward his co-workers and I've been pleased to see their respect and acceptance of him. I don't look forward to having the irregular schedule of the 12 hour shifts this summer.

My thoughts have been on Paul a lot this past week. It still doesn't seem real that he will be home and one hour away come September. Each time I make a decision, I think of him and hope that he will be pleased with the arrangements we have made and that we have been good stewards of his finances.

Following a call to the financial aid office at Ricks we decided that there is a good chance that with three students in '99, we may be able to pull in some Pell grant money this year where

we haven't been able to do that for about the last five years. We have done a lot of thinking, counseling, and talking to figure out how we can maximize our situation financially as we try to get finances arranged for another year. Each time I go through this process, I recognize our dependence on the Lord. I count it as no small miracle that all of you have had opportunity for a college education and that somehow you managed to put together the funds to make it happen. I know the Lord has supported us in this and am quick to acknowledge his loving watch care over us in this pursuit.

Saturday Daddy spent most of the day working to spruce up the yard and pasture. It was a beautiful, calm spring day and about three he started the ditch bank weeds on fire to clean up the dried debris. No sooner had he started the fire than a slight breeze came up and before he knew it, the canal bank, our pasture, and the neighbor's pasture were all ablaze. Reed Hanni and his two sons who were out working joined Daddy with shovels and soon even the neighbors to the west (in whose direction the blaze was advancing) were out and ready with hoses in case the flames jumped from the back of Trejo's property to theirs. One problem was that Trejo's didn't have their pasture grazed off last summer and so there was a tremendous amount of dried weeds that burned in a hurry. To make a two-hour story short, it was a harrowing experience and we felt fortunate that the fire only burned what it was supposed to.

I was standing in our back yard watching it all and counting the number of people from the other housing development who were outside ready to help. I commented later to Daddy that it was quite a neighborhood party, minus the wieners and roasting sticks. Anyway, I was grateful to see the last flames die and know that we didn't have to pay for some neighbor's outbuildings.

Aside from the blaze, I worried about Daddy's phlebitis. He has tried to be wise with what he does, but to get in the middle of a situation like that and realize that he had to see it through, was hard. Last week he purchased some support stockings that he has been wearing and it has been amazing how much of a difference they've made. By nightfall, his leg and ankle aren't as swollen and red and he can tell that they are helping him keep the circulation going. I know he is feeling pressure to get the yard work

started before we get too far into summer since then his time will be dominated by his camp responsibilities. I am also feeling the pressure since for a few weeks I am limited in how much I can help.

Several of you have asked regarding the letter of the Chihuahua temple dedication. I have forwarded that letter to you on e-mail. The last two pages are the part that refers to Mike and his reference to Grandma Gooch. Hopefully you can find time for reading that part if nothing else. Mike is still dating Julie and they are in the middle of some weighty decisions. He is in charge of his mission reunion on April 2nd, continues as the ward executive secretary, just found out he was one of 70 workers laid off at NetSchool, is awaiting word of spring and summer scholarships, and carrying 16 credits. Some of you older siblings can identify with that kind of schedule and the stress involved and know what he is going through. It is reassuring to me, whenever I get to worrying about him, to know that he spends time each week in the temple and a lot of time on his knees in prayer.

Last night, after we had our scripture time and scheduling session, SaraKay started teasing Tim by throwing nerf gun balls at his head. He had on a silly hat he had received as a gift for Morp and he just kept taking her abuse and soon we were all laughing. Later I got involved on the phone, but between phone calls I found them both in SaraKay's bedroom, SaraKay tucked in for the night and Tim lying beside her in the darkness, talking about the activities of their day. It was a familiar scene but one that always fills me with gratitude for Tim and his efforts to stay close to his little sister. Who would have guessed almost nine years ago that SaraKay's arrival would bring out the soft side of the "Rambo" kid! Some of you may remember the incident I related at Tim's Eagle court of honor. Tim returned home from school one day and unlike other days when SaraKay was at the door waiting, she was somewhere else in the house. He looked around for her for a few minutes and then let out a yell, "SaraKay, I'm home. Come bother me!" It is going to leave a tremendous void in our lives to have him gone this fall and we aren't looking forward to it. Like Tim said last night after he tucked her in, "Just who is she going to pester after I'm gone?"

In closing let me just express again my appreciation to each of you for your faith and

prayers. The day Dr. Petersen indicated to me that he suspected I had ovarian cancer, my life didn't flash before my eyes, but in a way, my future life did. I kept thinking of all the wonderful times that are out ahead for us and the thought of not being able to participate was a sobering one. The first night that we received word of the possibility of cancer, Daddy and I got on the Internet and looked up the information about it. The statistics were grim: 60% of all ovarian cancer diagnosed resulted in death within the first five years despite aggressive treatment. We recognized why Dr. Petersen was so adamant about getting me in for surgery. It was difficult to know just how hard to pray because I recognized that adversity is an important part of this earthly experience and that I can't expect to be spared when so many others have had to "drink the bitter cup". I did pray that the Lord would bless us all with a feeling of comfort and peace regarding the outcome of the surgery and a feeling of acceptance.

When I came out of surgery and heard the good news, I was so grateful and since that time I have had a feeling of being handed a precious gift—the gift of time. Time to see the seasons come and go for another year, time to finish raising SaraKay and share in the joys of marriages and missions, time to hold my grandchildren and watch them grow, time to help my parents through this time of transition in their lives.

[Dad] Last night for FHE we spent about an hour and a half over at Dad's cleaning up outside flower beds and the entry way and turning water on and checking for leaks. It seems hard to believe that they will be home in a couple weeks. We are excited to get them home. For some reason, it seems like two years for them has been longer than the two years for single missionaries.

For Priesthood meeting Sunday we had the Brigham Young lesson on self-control. It was a fun lesson to teach and it was easy to get lots of participation in the discussion. I used my experience with the fire the day before and the common reference in the scriptures to fire when talking about passions. It was calm when I started the fire to burn parts of our pasture and ditch bank and everything was under control. All it took was a shift in direction and an increase in intensity of the wind and the flames were out of

control. The banks of the canal and the dike across the east edge of the housing development behind us helped to set the limits of the fire. In the case of Trejo's shed, we set backfires and soaked the grass around it to prevent the fire from getting too close. Likewise, we must bank the fires of passion and cool them before we lose control. I told of two friends that have been involved with child abuse and have had to serve time in prison for their actions. Both of them got started down that path by viewing pornography. Control over our actions and passions starts with the mind.

President Clinton certainly came to mind when I read this quote from Brigham Young: "No man ever did, or ever will rule judiciously on this earth, with honor to himself and glory to his God, unless he first learns to rule and control himself. A man must first learn to rule himself rightly before his knowledge can be fully brought to bear for the correct government of a family, a neighborhood, or nation, over which it is his lot to preside."

March 29, 1999

[Mom] Tuesday morning I puttered around the house doing my usual tasks and about eleven I decided to lie down for a little while. At 11:30 I went into the kitchen and got some stuff out of the frig for lunch. As is my normal routine, I read the newspaper while I had my lunch. I was alone in the house and hadn't bothered to turn on any lights, TV, or CD's. I was sitting with my back toward the kitchen door that goes into the garage.

I thought I heard something for a moment but I knew I would hear the garage door opener if Daddy was home and that if Tim was home, he would come in through the front door. I continued reading for a moment and then turned toward the back kitchen door just in time to see it slowly being pulled closed and the door knob turning. There wasn't a sound and it was too far closed for me to see who had a hold on the door knob.

At first I thought Daddy had opened it and decided to go back to the pick-up for something he had forgotten to bring in with him, but it was done so quietly that it just didn't seem like what he would do. I thought maybe it was Melanie but she always comes to the front door and has never not knocked before entering. It appeared that someone had quietly opened the back

door, seen me sitting there, and been exiting quietly when I turned around just in time to see the door closing but not in time to see who was there.

I became very nervous about the situation and decided to get out of the house through the front door. This I did but I saw no one. I walked out to the front yard, around the house closest to the road, and even checked the pasture. I didn't feel comfortable checking the garage, though, and so I returned to the house and called 911. I explained the situation and they said that they would send out a policeman to check around the house for any prowler. I mentioned to them that last Saturday there was a stranger walking on the road and Tim was outside and came in and told me that he had seen the man climb down in the canal under the bridge. There isn't water in the canals yet and it seemed a rather curious sight so Tim mentioned it to me.

The police arrived a few minutes later and checked the neighborhood and drove down the canal bank. By this time I had gathered enough courage to check in the garage and I noticed that the small back door was ajar. We have tried to keep it closed because we get a lot of wind and if that door isn't closed, our garage gets dirty. Anyway, the police found some men's footprints in the canal and they checked those out but I suspect they found nothing since they didn't get back to me.

The whole episode unnerved me. I tried to call Daddy but he had forgotten to turn on his car phone. I kept thinking about all the possible explanations but nothing made any sense. Ever since getting our automatic garage door openers, we have kept the garage doors down and the back door secured. Daddy and I have both commented on how safe it has made us feel to know that those doors aren't open and our tools, freezer, and other equipment out in the open for anyone to see. I have virtually no one come to the kitchen door anymore and the patio doors were covered with that heavy plastic that we use to cut the wind and cold in the winter. When Daddy called later that afternoon, I related the incident to him and when he came home, he helped calm me down.

The next morning, he told me that he had figured out who it was. He said there was an article in the newspaper that morning about an

escaped felon who stole a car and abandoned it near the canal about a mile from our home. This fellow has escaped three separate times from the Blackfoot jail. He is about 24 and a nonviolent offender and Daddy said that maybe he was hungry and looking for lunch. Who knows! Anyway, it has certainly made me more vigilant about locking doors and turning on lights and having some sound in the house while I am here alone.

To make my day even more traumatic, I got a call later that afternoon from Karl Johns whose property borders on ours to the west. He said that in the fire Daddy started the previous Saturday, some of his pine trees had gotten damaged and he had been waiting for a call from us to make things right. I tried to stay calm and explained to him that I was certain Daddy wasn't aware that there had been any damage or he would have contacted him. I assured him that I would have Dad call the minute he arrived home. Tim was playing for the Jazz championship that evening and I realized that it was going to be really late before Dad got home so I located him and had him try to get to Karl before he lost patience and took further measures. I was so worried about the trees and hoped we weren't looking at a big bill to replace them.

When I finally did get through to Dad, he said that he had seen that some of them had been singed but he thought they would snap out of it and so he hadn't called the John's. Following the game that night, Daddy visited with Karl and agreed to contact our insurance carrier and seek compensation. I was so relieved to find out that we wouldn't have to pay for the damage out of our own pockets.

Tim's Jazz team took the championship and completed their season on Tuesday. Thursday they started regional play and beat their opponent 112-49. Friday they won 96-37.

We've had a few nice days that have made me wish I could get outside with a shovel and get going on yard work but for the most part it has been too cold and miserable to venture out. We are looking forward to having some of the kids' home for Easter this Sunday. It's special to have it on conference Sunday, too. Hope that all of you can catch at least some of the sessions.

[Dad] Last night for FHE we went to Idaho Falls to get a report from Chet and Becky about their

Caribbean Cruise. We saw some cute footage of Madison swimming and sleeping and then enjoyed some time in their hot tub. It was so relaxing!

We are so excited to get Dad and Alva Lu home. Yesterday I finished fixing a leaky toilet and some cleaning ladies were there vacuuming up dead bugs and spider webs. The power, water, and gas are on and we will turn up the heat before they get here. With the cleanup we did last week outside, the old home place looks pretty good.

Last Thursday, we drove to Salt Lake and had lunch with Arch and Ilene. Then we went to the Murray Tandy store to pick up about \$3,000 worth of stuff for Treasure Mountain and Island Park Scout Camps. Tandy is closing out their stores all over the country and we got some really good buys on craft items we needed. Then we went to an Estate Planning Seminar sponsored by the National Council of the Boy Scouts and a reception and Art Tour. It was quite awe inspiring to view the originals of Norman Rockwell, Joseph Csatari, Lord Baden Powell, and others.

April 5, 1999

[Mom] Last week was a busy one. I still don't have the stamina I normally do and so I tried to pace myself with my work around the house. I wanted to have everything ready for our weekend company and I started early in the week to change beds, set up extra beds, thoroughly vacuum and dust the basement, clean all the bathrooms, and prepare the food for the meals. Becky called Wednesday and offered to come help but I felt like I was on top of things.

Friday morning Tim was scheduled for his oral surgery on his wisdom teeth and I knew it was going to take most of the morning in Pocatello for that and so when Becky called and offered again, I took her up on it. By the time we had returned from Pocatello it was nearly two that afternoon and I was so grateful for Becky's extra hands in the kitchen. We made salads, baked beans, potato casserole, dressing, ice cream toppings, and other things for Saturday and Sunday meals. She brought a tape of "The Sound of Music" and we enjoyed that fun music as we worked together. SaraKay entertained Madison so well that we were able to work

uninterrupted for several hours and get done what we needed to.

It was really amazing how grown up Madison is getting. She played hide and seek and other games with SaraKay and the two of them really had fun together. She is standing up to things, crawling, and exploring everything in sight.

In the meantime, Tim lay in the bedroom with an ice pack on his cheeks and heavily medicated. He had an important ball game that night but the dentist made it clear that he couldn't play in it. I don't think Tim felt up to it anyway, but when seven o'clock rolled around, he talked me into driving him over to the stake center to watch the team. I didn't stay for the game, but I guess he ended up coaching the team and even had the referee threaten him with a technical for yelling, "Call it both ways!" When Tim arrived home, he looked a sight. He had a ring of blood all around his lips and I wondered how any referee could have threatened him with anything, considering how miserable he looked and felt. Anyway, they won the game 93-88 and now they advance to the championship of the region. Wednesday, they play in Venture games and his goal is to be able to play.....a lofty goal considering how swollen and miserable he is today.

Our weekend with everyone home was hectic but wonderful. We had invited Steve and Bonnie to join us when we found out that Mike and Julie, and John and Laurel were coming but initially they felt like they wouldn't be able to make it. Later in the week Bonnie called and related to me the situation that had been developing with her father. He has been in a lot of pain and finally on Friday they operated and found an enormous abscess in his intestines. They were able to remove it but his condition is very critical because of the chance (50-50) that the infection would spread through his blood stream and cause damage to kidneys or his lungs.

Bonnie felt such a need to be here for her mother and so they decided to join us and let Nathan, Rachel, and Steve visit here while she went to Idaho Falls to be with her parents. It was a treat for us because SaraKay was looking forward to an Easter egg hunt and other activities that are rather hard to do if you only have one child old enough to do them. When she found out they were coming she made all

kinds of fun things and games to play and they had a great time together.

It was sweet to have John and Laurel here. They will soon be gone for the summer and not available for family events until they return from their job in the East. John graduates the 23rd of April and Laurel and Emma will fly out May 1st with John following a week later. They have sublet their apartment and they have a lot to do to have things ready for their departure. They will fly to Cincinnati and drive from there to Connecticut. Laurel's parents are loaning them a car to use for the summer and that is making it possible for them to make the trip with less expense, time and worry. They are making plans to attend the Palmyra pageant this summer.

Little Emma is such a pleasant, happy baby and we all enjoyed playing with her as we watched conference. She was so good to occupy herself with a few toys and to scoot around on the floor. She has a ready smile for everyone and didn't protest when she got handed around during conference.

It was also fun for us to get better acquainted with Julie. She is certainly an impressive and talented young woman and she was a good sport to join right in with all the activities. We are pleased that her family is going to be in Provo for her graduation in April and that Mike will have a chance to meet them. He is going to return to Portland with them for a short visit before starting into Spring term. He learned upon returning yesterday that he had received full tuition for both terms this summer so that was a big relief for him. Now to find a job and put that piece of his summer's puzzle together.

Becky and Chet got here about five on Saturday night and the men attended the priesthood session while we watched the kids and visited. We had such a fun time talking about courtship, marriage, romance, and other such things. We had a great time sharing all this wonderful wisdom and information with Julie and she was gracious and sweet about listening to all our advice and opinions although I have serious doubts about whether she needed or wanted it. Anyway, the men returned all too soon and we had our traditional "pork out on ice cream" ritual to end our day.

Sunday we listened to both sessions of conference and thoroughly enjoyed it. By the time the second session was nearly over, the

kids were getting restless and we were having a hard time focus but I think we caught most of what was said and kept the troops relatively calm until the closing song. Within a half hour everyone was loaded up and headed south. We loaded up and headed north to Becky and Chet's with some of the leftovers from dinner. Becky had developed a case of the flu late Saturday night and so they spent Sunday at home recuperating. We missed them and I felt especially bad since she had done so much of the cooking and then not been able to join us for Sunday dinner.

SaraKay enjoyed the time with the nieces and nephews. She had organized Easter activities, made cardboard bunny cups, drawn treasure maps, filled baskets with small treasures, and orchestrated the "hunt". Later she kept the kids occupied with an assortment of toys, books, and other diversions and activities. She got up early with Rachel to see what the Easter bunny left and spent most of Sunday playing with the kids so the rest of us could enjoy the conference. I really appreciated her and couldn't help remembering all the times that Aunt Karen and Aunt Lisa made our trips to Grandma's so enjoyable for the grandkids in those early years.

Tomorrow Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are due home. Daddy's spent a lot of time the last two weeks at the home place getting things ready.

I got Paul's registration materials in the mail and now I have to face the daunting task of getting him registered over the phone. I'm going to recruit Tim since he will have to register himself in another month and this can be a trial run for him.

[Dad] I finished writing up all the rejection letters, contracts, and so on for camp and got them in the mail. It is a relief to have all that done.

We had Darvel fix the Toyota again, so it is up and running. I still don't know what was wrong with the Pontiac, but it wouldn't start. Yesterday, Sue and I towed it to Darvel's and it is running now. It seems like we have had a rash of car bills and medical bills lately.

Friday, I went in to the clinic for a full physical. I met with a new internist that Dr. Bradbury recommended. I was pleased with the results-especially when he told me I shouldn't be on the coumadin for any longer than 3 months. My leg

is getting better and I even went without the support hose yesterday and it looked fine last night. I am starting to exercise and walk or ride to get in shape for camp.

April 11, 1999

[Mom] It's 11 p.m. and I'm here at the computer waiting for the midnight hour so I can get Paul registered for his fall classes. I've figured out his schedule and am going to try to get into the system at Ricks and make sure he gets the classes he needs. Tim's registration isn't for another couple of weeks, but the information for Paul arrived and between us we have figured it out.

Daddy left early this morning to catch a flight out of Salt Lake for Reno to attend an Endowment Seminar. He will be gone until late Wednesday night. He has been so busy lately with all his work responsibilities! I ask him the other day if he was burned out but he said that he was doing fine and excited about the group he has recruited to work for him this year at camp.

Last week he had a physical exam and received some encouragement regarding his phlebitis. The doctor was an internist right out of medical school and he asked Daddy a lot of questions about his condition and medications. He felt like the clots were a result of an injury and that once the blood returns to its normal flow that there will not be a need for Daddy to stay on the heavy medications he is presently taking. He also said that since there isn't a history of phlebitis in Dad's family that he felt this case may be a fluke. He said that a lot of studies have been done comparing patients who were medicated versus those who discontinued the medication following a brief time and that the studies showed that there wasn't any advantage to continuing the medications indefinitely.

We had a big day today with the reorganization of our bishopric. Bob Jenks is the new bishop, Mark Adams is the first counselor, and Troy Goodwin is the second. Dan Crites is the executive secretary. What a sweet bunch! It was certainly a teary meeting as each of the old and new bishopric members bore their testimonies and expressed thanks. I think it was all the more poignant because of Bishop Godfrey's cancer and the terrible toll it has taken on him. He has lost most of his hair and he is so thin and ashen looking. Chemo therapy is such an awful thing, especially when a person has to take several

months of treatments as has Bishop Godfrey. I don't know how much more he can endure.

Tim had quite a day last Friday. He was scheduled for his post-op visit with the oral surgeon Friday morning. He had really been in a lot of pain in the lower left jaw area and we kept medicating him to try to get some relief. On Wednesday I called the doctor and he said that we could come in early for an exam but that Tim would probably start feeling better within a couple days.

When we went in Friday morning and the doctor took one look at the wound, he couldn't believe it. The hole where the tooth had been removed had sealed over and it was swollen and full of puss. He had to cut open the incision area and then apply pressure to Tim's bottom gums to squeeze out as much of the infection as he could. It was extremely painful and Tim felt like he'd been beaten up by the time he got out of the chair. What a nightmare!

Immediately following that traumatic experience, the pain subsided and he hasn't had any more problems. They placed a large medicated swab in the hole and he has to return this week for another check-up. He has finally had relief from the pain and hopefully the worst is behind him.

Friday night our church team won the regional championship. They played a wonderful game and ended the season on a high. Saturday they played two Venture games, lost the second, and were eliminated from the tournament. I couldn't help but feel relieved to have it over. The season has gone on and on and I think most of us were ready to have it end. It has been an exciting thing to see these boys play together and I'm sure it will be one of the sweetest memories that Tim has of his high school years.

We have had another small drama going on with the bunnies. When SaraKay went out to feed them Friday, there were dead baby bunnies all over the pen. This was the second time this has happened in the last two months. There was a lot of fur in the back of the cage but most of the babies were scattered on the wire and exposed to the cold.

Friday night at the game I asked the other parents if anyone knew why we were having so much trouble saving any of the baby rabbits. Mark Adams said that we should take the male rabbit out of the cage when it was time for the

mother to have her babies because the male will kill them every time. Live and learn. I'm glad we found out what the problem is and maybe this next time we can save them. It has been understandably upsetting to SaraKay. She has loved her rabbits and has been faithful about taking care of them all winter.

As most of you already know, Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's mission report will be on Sunday the 25th instead of on the 18th. It is going to be an interesting weekend for us since that is our stake conference and I have been asked to speak in the Saturday night session on "Family Councils". Daddy won't even be here since he is flying out the previous day for Miami and a camp school training. That is also the weekend that John and Julie graduate so it is going to be crazy for us all.

I know Grandpa and Grandma are expecting a lot of family and friends for the meeting and the dinner afterwards so it is going to be a lot of preparation and company for them. We are really excited to hear their report. It's been nice to have them home!

Yesterday we received the news that Dennis and Kanae Leavitt's little boy, Joel, was killed in an accident at their home. As some of you will remember, he is a dwarf and very tiny and short. He was behind the pick-up and his brother, Daynon, didn't know he was there and backed up over him. What a sad time for that family! Life surely seems to be full of difficult and trying situations. I have thought of little else since learning of it yesterday. I'm grateful that our school board decided not to attend the National School Board convention this year or we would have all been in San Francisco when it happened. I saw Dennis last week and we talked about missing the convention this year. Little did we realize then how grateful he and Kanae would be that they were home when this tragedy happened.

April 19, 1999

[Dad] Things are looking good around our yard-I don't remember a year when I have felt like we have been more on top of things than we are this year. Saturday, Tim and I put the fences all back together after the ditcher had gone through. We even created a new gate to be able to get into the fenced off area where we have planted the hybrid poplar windbreak behind the house.

I had a good time in Reno last week. We were staying at the Silver Legacy. Three major hotels, casinos, theaters, stores, and game places are all connected together in quite an awesome complex. The meetings were excellent and we came home with lots of good ideas. One day was dedicated to Friends of Scouting drives and ideas, one day was for Endowment ideas, and the last day was for Capital Campaign and special fund-raising programs such as Golf Tournaments, Auctions, etc. I had a fifteen-minute presentation to make on the Endowment day dealing with marketing of James E. West Fellowships. I had conceived and executed a direct mail campaign with the theme, "Put a Log on the Fire-Keep the Spirit of Scouting burning." That had been quite successful a couple years ago, followed up with last year's theme of, "Give a Boy a Compass-the Values of Scouting." It was a little disappointing that they had misspelled my name on the program, gave me the wrong title, jockeyed around the schedule, and then were unable to provide the overhead projector that had been promised. It went over pretty well, despite those handicaps.

Mom] As Daddy mentioned, he was gone last week Sunday-Thursday. I kept reminding myself that this was a trial run for the months ahead when he leaves for scout camp and that I should take note of what problems I have and address those with Daddy before he leaves again. I guess it wasn't a true trial run because summer brings all the pressures of irrigating and gardening.

We have gotten a lot done outside including planting a windbreak (for the second time), digging around the other trees and fertilizing them, and mowing the lawn. Things are shaping up and I'm encouraged. Last year we discovered that if we put Caseron around the trees after we had cleaned them up that they would stay weed free for most of the summer. We also learned that a little fertilizer applied at the drip-line of the trees gives them the nutrients for good health and hearty growth. We have applied Caseron to our berry patch and it is nearly weed-free this spring, too. Daddy bought a new, lighter tiller for Tim and I to use. The older one was so big and bulky and nearly impossible to start. I knew Tim and I would never survive the summer with it. Lakes offered to give us a load of manure and we'll get that next week after Dad returns from his trip.

Last time we planted the windbreak, we made a trip to Aberdeen to get the starts. We didn't realize that planting them in a field of pasture grass would choke them out and after babying them along for a whole season, it was heartbreaking to see them die off. If we hadn't fenced off the area and spent money for the fencing, we probably would have given up the project. Last summer I noticed that Pam Lake had a windbreak of the same "Aussie" trees and I approached her about getting some new starts. I called the greenhouse for advice and was told that we would have to clear the pasture grass off first. We hired a fellow who owned a small tractor to come and till it for us.

When he was finished, we had a wonderful, loamy seedbed for the tree starts. I arranged to get the starts from Pam on Tuesday but the day dawned blustery and cold. I almost decided to forget the whole project but I knew that if we could get them in now that their chances for survival would be so much better than if we waited until the weather turned hot. So, I bundled up in my heavy winter coat, a stocking cap, warm gloves and footwear. I arrived at Pam's front door looking like the abominable snowman with a small pair of snippers in one hand and a bucket in the other. She walked we out to the windbreak and pointed out several large branches that were hanging over into her pasture area. She handed me a large saw and told me to take the entire thick branch and then cut it up into smaller two-foot lengths before planting. I mentioned that the branch was considerably larger than the small "starts" I had gotten from Aberdeen two years earlier and she said that the larger the branch, the heartier it would be and the chances of it surviving would be so much better.

When I finished sawing off the branches, I loaded them into the back seat of my Pontiac with the smaller end sticking out of the back window and dragging on the road. I drove home very slowly, looking more like a moving tree than a vehicle and hoping that no policeman would spot me and question the advisability of what I was doing. Luckily, I made it home safe and sound and with no ill effects to the car or the branches.

The branches were so tall that they couldn't even stand up straight in the garage so I tried sawing them up but my strength ran out before the branches did. Finally, I secured them in

water and awaited the "men folk" to help me finish up the task that evening. SaraKay and I have been watering them and praying that this time they will grow and flourish and that we can get some relief from the harsh winds that sweep across our property to the west. Daddy figured out how to make a small gate into the area and that will enable us to keep the ground tilled and weed free.

We are baffled by the infection that has vexed Tim since his surgery. When we went in last week the doctor prescribed penicillin and we return tomorrow for another check-up. He hasn't had any more discomfort with it, though, so that has been encouraging. This week is student body elections and all the preparations have had Tim on the run. He received word that he placed first in district solo competition so he will be competing in Boise on May 1st with four other soloist from Chambers. That is also prom and it has taken some fancy planning to be able to be in Boise that day to perform and to still have a memorable date that night. He is taking Kim Batt (Alison's little sister) (Paul's Ricks College girlfriend) and he has really been excited. He dated her nearly two years ago when Paul was home for the summer before leaving on his mission and he has never dated anyone since that he has enjoyed as much. He was hesitant to ask her since she is a freshman at Ricks this year, but she put him at ease when he called and she seemed really excited to go with him again.

I'm trying to get things ready for our trip to Provo. Becky and Madison are going with us as are Tim and SaraKay. Chet is on a business trip to California. We are planning to leave Thursday morning, meet the Provo group for lunch, take pictures of the proud graduate and family, and hopefully meet up with Bonnie and her mother and sister and sit close enough to get in some good visiting before Commencement starts. Steve will be on a business trip to Wisconsin that week and will have a chance to visit Keith and Maggie. Following Commencement Daddy will return with Bonnie to Tooele and she will get him to the airport the next morning for Miami. The rest of us will spend the night with John and Laurel, attend Convocation the next morning, head home and stop by to see Grandpa and Grandma Richards en route. We need to be home early Friday evening so Tim can help with the Campaign dance that night. Saturday

SaraKay has piano festival and I am speaking in the Saturday night session of stake conference. There is a chance Jeanie and some of her family may be here Saturday night since they are coming up after BYU graduation for Grandpa and Grandma's mission report on Sunday. We will be attending that meeting and the dinner and family gathering afterwards.

David and Andrea fly out of Dallas on Saturday and will be living in a motel in Tucson until their new home is finished. The company is moving them so it won't be nearly as traumatic as their last two moves! They are excited for the prospects of this transfer and we are so pleased to get them closer to home. It's interesting that we will have them in Tucson, Jeanie and family in Show Low, Miken and family in Phoenix, Grandpa and Grandma Larsen in Scottsdale for the winter, and Grandpa and Grandma Richards at Lisa and Don's in Gilbert after September. Kathy and Dick's Abby will be attending graduate school in Tempe starting in July of this year. Sounds like we have a lot of reasons to make a trip to Arizona this fall or winter!

Time marches on and Paul is in his final four months of his mission. His best friend, Merritt, is due home in 16 days and his other friends are not far behind. We received word that Paul and Mike will both get some Pell money this year although we don't know yet the size of the grant. That was good news. Tim's personal assets were too great to qualify him for Pell assistance but his stock market earnings and scholarship put him in good shape.

April 27, 1999

[Mom] I've had a busy day lining up the upcoming week, checking on Pell Grants, helping Caryn Esplin with her campaign, and going to music lessons with SaraKay and her friend, Angela. Once a month I use our Monday piano lesson for a violin lesson for the two of them at Linnea's. It has given Angela a break from her mother's instruction and is my contribution to the cause. It does me good to associate with Colleen Winder and Linnea. I admire them so much and I continue to learn from them. It is wonderful to see how they have made music a priority in their lives even though time is limited, schedules are harried, and everything isn't ideal. I have decided that most musicians come from situations where the most dominate characteristic of the home is not time,

money, or social standing; it is determination and desire. I have watched Colleen continue on despite financial hardships and other obstacles that would have discouraged most women. She really is committed and so we carry on despite the frenetic pace of things.

Taking lessons from Linnea is still rather frightening for SaraKay but she is adjusting to what Linnea expects and is rising to the challenge. I sit through the lesson listening carefully to all her instruction and marveling at all she knows about music. At the festival last Saturday SaraKay received a 99 on her two pieces and she was very pleased with that. She and Angela have a number that they are preparing to perform in sacrament meeting in May. Hopefully we can have it ready and it will be a positive experience.

Graduation in Provo was so wonderful. Despite the chilly weather and the scarcity of blossoming trees, we got some good pictures prior to commencement. We arrived in Provo and went to dinner with John, Laurel, Emma, Mike and Julie. We had made reservations at a Mexican restaurant and we thoroughly enjoyed the food. By the time we finished our meal, accommodating Emma and Madison, the table looked like a disaster, but it was so fun to be together!

At commencement this year the honorary doctorate degrees went to Anwar Sadat's widow for her work in humanitarian projects and to a woman who writes books, poetry, etc. I felt like every speaker addressed the subject of our responsibility to the poor and underprivileged of the world; worthy subjects and certainly ones we should all be concerned about. The organist was Dr. Bush who is one of John's favorite professor who he has taken several choral classes from. Following the main session, we took pictures on the grounds. Dr. Bush walked by and John introduced us to him and we took a picture of them together. Following the picture, Dr. Bush gave a John a big hug. Somehow, even though BYU is a big university, it's nice to know that it hasn't lost the personal touch.

Laurel provided a delicious supper for us and we were pleased to share the occasion with Laurel's sister, Karen, who was graduating, her father, Ken, and Uncle Bob, and Bonnie and Rachel. Daddy drove back to Tooele with Bonnie following supper and she drove him to the

airport the following day to catch his flight to Miami. We really appreciated her help.

Thursday night turned out to be quite a challenge with two small babies, Laurel's father, Becky, Tim, SaraKay and me all spending the night in John and Laurel's apartment. It was wall to wall people in the living room and Ken (Laurel's dad) and Emma shared the nursery. Madison had a difficult time settling down with all the day's excitement and it was nearly 10 before everyone managed to get to sleep. Mike dropped by after his dinner appointment at Julie's aunt's home and he and I sat in the darkened living room and visited quietly until nearly 11:30.

John's convocation was at 10:30 Friday morning and we arrived early to try to get good seating. Karen, who is Laurel's sister and the mother of four small preschoolers, went through the line with John so that Laurel's dad could see both of them receive their diploma. Karen's mother-in-law and Ken had the four children and just before the meeting started Karen's sister-in-law and her four small children arrived with Karen's husband from the airport. He had been stranded in California and had finally arrived in Salt Lake at 9:15 and been transported to the convocation just in the nick of time.

There we were with Karen's four preschoolers, the other four children, Emma and Madison and the rest of us all trying to keep the peace while the ceremony proceeded. It was an interesting situation and we survived it by the clever use of a bag of pretzels and the continuous rotation of the troops to keep them occupied and busy. Tim and SaraKay did their share of holding and entertaining the children and we made it through the ceremony with a minimum of problems.

Before the meeting started, we had arranged to meet Mike and Julie who had been attending her convocation earlier that morning but amidst all the throngs we missed seeing them. When John and Karen were announced and walked across the stage our whole group let out a resounding cheer and Mike and Julie were able to locate us. They had been sitting on the other side of the field house. Mike wanted me to meet Julie's parents and so I slipped out following the awarding of the diplomas and met and visited with them. What a wonderful, sweet couple. Before we were through visiting, the rest of the

group joined us and we visited for a while before we bid everyone good-bye and left for Salt Lake to visit Grandpa and Grandma Richards. We had lunch with them and left for home about 3:30.

We had been so preoccupied with the events in Provo that we hadn't watched TV or listened to any radio until we were on our way home. The area between Salt Lake and Tremonton had experienced some major wind storms on Thursday (113 mph) and 20 semis were blown over as well as campers being ripped off pickups, road signs being torn down, and roads closed as a result of the high winds. We hit a traffic jam in north Salt Lake and traveled bumper-to-bumper from Salt Lake to Ogden. Instead of taking three hours to get home, we took nearly 5. We stopped in Tremonton and had supper and also got some French fries that occupied Madison for quite a while. She certainly was a good little trooper for the entire trip despite being in unfamiliar territory and spending long hours in the car.

Someone asked me yesterday if BYU graduation gets any less exciting when you go as much as we do. I could truly say a resounding, "No!" It's always a wonderful treat to be in Provo and celebrate the completion of another degree.

I am including an e-mail from Dave and Andrea. They arrived in Tucson on April 24th and are going to be living in temporary housing for a few weeks. Andrea commented that moving back to Arizona seems like coming home to them. Tucson is a beautiful city nestled in the desert and mountains; they are excited to be closer to family after three years so far away. What a relief to have them arrive safely!

The homecoming for Grandpa and Grandma Larsen was wonderful. Saturday evening Gary, Mark, and Rick came here to practice a song for the Sunday meeting. Jeanie played for them and Julianne and I visited and prepared some food for the big dinner on Sunday. It was so fun to hear the brothers singing together again! My only regret was that Daddy was missing all the fun. We laughed and laughed and the later it got, the funnier everything was. About 11 Grandpa called to remind us that we had an early meeting the next day, and so we finished up and everyone went home. When they left Jeanie and I and Julianne stayed up until 1:30 talking.

Following the meeting Sunday most of the Larsen's came here to prepare their food while some of the family attended the rest of their meetings and others went to Dad and Alva Lu's to help there. At 12:30 we went over to the home place and joined about 80 other friends and family for a delicious meal. Those attending from the Larsen side included us who live close as well as Jeanie and Julianne, Staff, Jennifer, and her daughter, Rachel, and Mark, Jeff, Janette, and JoEllen. Linda was in Salt Lake with Lisa who had been involved in a head-on collision in Salt Lake a few days before. She was very fortunate to have been able to walk away from the incident without any injuries although her car was demolished. I'm sure it was reassuring for her to have Linda there with her for a few days. It seems like the trauma of something like that lingers for a long time.

May 4, 1999

[Mom] We've had a full weekend with Steve, Bonnie and family here with us. Bonnie's sister, Julie, was married on Friday and they had all the festivities associated with that. I was in charge of babysitting on Friday and I got along pretty well despite the fact that I had SaraKay's school program that afternoon. I took a diaper bag full of crackers, treats, and toys that I thought would keep the kids occupied. Rachel was fascinated with the school kids and all the singing and dancing. Nathan was quite interested in the program but the crackers helped keep him content. Christine was so tired that she sat quietly on my lap for nearly the entire hour and a half. I was sitting with several friends who offered assistance if I needed it, but we made it!

Following the program, we left for Idaho Falls where Bonnie's family was gathering for pictures prior to the reception. Rachel and Christine had beautiful peach-colored dresses and Nathan had a tuxedo. The minute we got in the car to leave for Idaho Falls, everyone fell fast asleep. It was a quiet ride for me and a much-needed nap for each of them. It was a memorable but very late night for them and they were worn out by the time they returned following the reception. It was nice to be able to be close enough that we could provide beds and some babysitting for the occasion. Jean has been good to help us out and I was glad to reciprocate.

The highlight of the weekend for the Bensons was having their dad, Morris, there with them.

He was released from the hospital the day before the wedding and although he was weak, he was able to join with them at the temple and greet guests at the reception. What a blessing!

(Tuesday) We awoke to a winter wonder land this morning. It could have been a day in December from the look of the snow storm but it's quit now and hopefully the sun will start to shine. I failed to mention in last week's letter that Daddy was called to be the stake Young Men's president. He was sustained in stake conference although he was in Miami and they set his presidency apart last Wednesday. He has met with his presidency and they are pulling together the events that were already on the calendar. It has been quite a task considering all the pressures he is under with his endowment work and his camp preparations. When he was called, he mentioned to the stake presidency about his camp responsibilities and they said that they were aware of that and still wanted to extend the call. I think Daddy is pleased with the confidence they expressed in him and anxious to get things rolling. One big strength he has is his knowledge of the way scouting fits with the Aaronic Priesthood program. I know he will be a real asset.

Last night was the spring concert for the community orchestra. What a thrill to see the growth that fledgling group has experienced over the last five years. I think it is nothing short of miraculous that we are able to have an orchestra considering how rural a community we are. It has been a special delight to have daddy playing first chair trumpet and to see how valued he is there. Although SaraKay had already sat through a performance earlier in the day, she attended again with me and I was able to talk through with her some of the numbers. My favorite was the medley from Porgy and Bess, especially "Summertime". It brought back an unexpected but pleasant rush of memories. I never sit through a recital or concert without regretting my early choice to drop music lessons. I have certainly missed out on a lot of joy because of that choice.

Tim is on tour with the Chamber Singers until Thursday evening and then he has their annual spring concert Friday and Saturday nights. May, with all its graduation festivities, is upon us. I'm grateful for the many activities which help us celebrate and contemplate these last 18 years.

Tim had an enjoyable date to prom last weekend with Kim Batt. They went on a horseback ride and had a picnic and wiener roast in the lavas during the day and then went to dinner at Jake's before attending the dance. He looked sharp, Kim looked beautiful, and they seemed to have a great time. He told me later that he and his six best friends all had their pictures taken in their tuxedos following the prom pictures. That is going to be a special memory for the bunch of them.

I had mixed emotions about his decision to not compete at state solo in Boise that day but he couldn't participate in that and get back in time to do much for prom, so he withdrew. Monday at piano lessons Linnea commented that she was able to hear most of the competition at state since she was accompanying many of the soloist and she felt like Tim would have done very well if he had gone. She understood though, since it was his last prom.

SaraKay started little league softball and came home from the practice feeling pretty insecure. I promised her some practice time with me before her next week's game so that she understands the game a little better. It has been so cold, windy and rainy the last two weeks that we have hardly had a day that we could be outside so it has been impossible to do much towards developing her skills. She is on a team with Lucinda Mangum and her daughters so it is going to be convenient for me and fun for her to play on the team with her close friend, Trisha Mangum.

Stephani and Linds' ward in Hollister has increasing activity with their Spanish members and their meeting schedules are set up on Sunday to have separate sacrament meetings but overlapping Primary, Young woman, etc. It has been rewarding for them to be a part of this missionary effort since they both speak Spanish and have a love for the people.

Shauntel has made arrangements to drive with a friend and be here the end of May and into June two weeks for a visit. She will be able to be here for Tim's graduation as well as to attend the mission farewell for Taggart Archibald, Randy's younger brother.

Jonie is working in a pharmacy and enjoying the opportunities there. Their new home has been such a blessing to them.

David and Andrea are living in a comfortable three-bedroom apartment complete with deck and pool until their home is ready for occupancy. David's first day of work at his new location was yesterday and so he had a week to unwind following the stressful few months prior to leaving Plano.

Becky is taking Madison and flying to Cedar Rapids tomorrow to spend a week with Shauntel. They have plans to tour in Chicago, visit Nauvoo and Carthage, and take the babies to the park to fly kites. Chet's original plans to be in Des Moines were canceled so he will be elsewhere but he encouraged Becky to follow through on this much anticipated trip.

Mike returned from Portland and his enjoyable trip with Julie to a heavy Spring/Summer class load and a job search. Julie is in Provo for the summer and they are continuing their courtship.

Paul sent home some film to be developed and he looks just as "healthy and happy" as he claims to be in all his short letters. His best friend, Merritt, is due home any day.

Grandpa Richards is having some problems with his eyesight and will receive some materials from the institute that prepares magazine tapes and supplies for those with blindness. Grandma is still in good health.

May 11, 1999

[Dad] One of the most exciting and challenging things in my life right now is my call to be Stake Young Men's President. I truly felt directed by the Lord in the choices for counselors and secretary and that is really proving out as we begin to work together. We were faced with some big tasks right away; a stake service project for the young men and also a "Mini-MTC" that was on the calendar for June 12. We have been scrambling to get our feet under us, learn our responsibilities, make meetings meaningful, get up to speed for the final two ward conferences and upcoming bi-stake dances. Each of my counselors have taken a major role in developing these two major tasks and we are going to be able to pull them off in classic form!

In the meantime, nothing is slowing down as far as my endowment work and getting ready for camp. Last Saturday was the Council Camp School where we pull in all the staffs for all the camps and give them a day of training. We held it at Snake River Junior High and had over 170

in attendance. Island Park was responsible for the lunch and Sue was a great help to me in helping take care of that. I was also responsible for lining up quite a few of the instructors for the various departments and had to deal with some last-minute surprises there.

This weekend is the Council Recognition Night with the VIP reception before it that Sue and I have done for the last couple of years. We are gearing up for it with invitations sent, signs, name tags, and preparing for and serving 175-200 people. This month is also the James E. West campaign and I have been getting names and addresses, making up letters, doing mailings and phone calls for that.

This month is also full of winding up events for Tim as he prepares to graduate-so we have the Continuous Reading Fireside (he is one of 3 male -1333 readers and 8 female), Seminary Graduation, High School Graduation, Chambers Concert & Dinner, and so on. Meanwhile, we have an 8-year-old that has started playing softball and wants us to her games.

The end of this month I will leave for a week as I go to National Camp School in Peaceful Valley, Colorado to become certified as a Camp Director. With all the snow we have had I'm concerned that we will be able to get into camp but, I guess everything will work out. I am excited about having our reunion this fall at Island Park. Also, with Ben Hansen as Business Manager, I should be able to get away for part of the Allan Larsen reunion in July.

[Mom] In the late 60's and early 70's there was a brother\sister duo, the Carpenters, who popularized a song "Rainy Days and Mondays Always Get Me Down". That song came to mind yesterday for me when we awoke to about three inches of fresh snow, a cold wind, and overcast skies. I spent a great deal of time in the morning on the phone talking to "prerecorded messages" giving me options 1,2,or 3, and then finally getting through to a real, live person who politely declined discussing the reason our insurance claim had been denied. During piano lessons SaraKay seemed to be in la-la land and I began wondering if she would ever figure out how to count time or identify notes.

Later in the afternoon we had a song practice for some Aaronic priesthood boys who will be singing in sacrament meeting Sunday and by the time they left, I was a bundle of nerves

wondering if I was going to have my living room dismantled by the restless bunch. SaraKay discovered that her rabbit had given birth again and although the male rabbit had been taken out of the cage, for some inexplicable reason, all the babies were dead. We had planned to spend home evening in the yard and garden and by evening the wind had subsided, the snow melted, but it was so cold that we had to bundle up in our winter apparel to keep warm. We looked like an unlikely bunch as we measured rows, spread Caseron, planted beans, peas, and potatoes, and finally came inside about nine. I'm not sure the seeds will germinate until this weather breaks but we knew we would not have another opportunity to do it until next week if we didn't get it done last night.

Today dawned sunny (and cold) and I'm feeling like maybe I can put aside yesterday's blues. Funny that I could have such a blah day following such a rewarding Mother's Day. Thanks to all of you who touched base with me and expressed love and concern. I hope that all the mothers in our family had a special day, too.

On Saturday we received a quick call from Paul lining up a time on Sunday when we could call him for the traditional Mother's Day missionary call. The best time for all of us was at 6 a.m. so that was what we scheduled. Daddy talked with him before leaving for his 6:30 meeting, Tim talked with him before leaving for his 7:00 meeting and SaraKay and I finished up. What fun! The connection was so good that it sounded like he was in the next room.

As a part of my call, Paul and his companion sang "I Am a Child of God" in Spanish. Their voices blended so well that I could not pick out one voice from the other. It was wonderful and a sweet gesture. This particular companion is from Honduras and they have been very happy together. After hearing them harmonize, I felt that they were truly kindred spirits.

Paul asked about school and other arrangements we have been making and about the family in general. It is always nice to know that he is keeping abreast of happenings at home through all the letters he is receiving from us and many of you. He doesn't have a release day as yet but he was going to visit with his president again about the August 31 deadline for starting Ricks.

When I visited with Mike Sunday evening, he mentioned that it was kind of emotionally draining helping John with the final preparations for leaving Provo last Saturday. John and Laurel have been so kind and generous to Mike this past year and he has often dropped in to seek counsel or just have a touch of family (or food). Mike said that he realized that John and Laurel will be back just one week before Paul returns and that was an interesting thought on the passage of time. John flew out Saturday and will spend part of this week with Laurel's family before they leave for Connecticut.

Sunday evening we visited Alva Lu and Dad. This coming Sunday we are going to have a dinner with the extended Larsen bunch to celebrate Grandpa's 80th birthday. What a wonderful milestone! We wish more of you were close and could join us. We are serving dinner at six and then will have a short program after that. Grandpa and Alva Lu were en route from Arizona on Allan's birthday so we weren't able to make a fuss then.

Tim arrived home Thursday from his Chambers Tour and then had long practices for their spring concert on Friday and Saturday nights. Following the performance on Saturday, one of the members hosted a party but Tim was so tired from the week's activities that he came home and went to bed. Tonight is their annual parents' dinner concert and we are looking forward to that. SaraKay has two ball games tonight and we've had to make some elaborate arrangements to account for her. She received a two-month detailed schedule of all her practices, games, and season's end festivities and she was so fascinated with all the upcoming events that she carried that paper around with her everywhere she went for several days. She wasn't content until she had nearly memorized every date, location, and time. When Tim arrived home on Thursday, she went over it with him in detail, again. I guess she feels like she has finally arrived now that she has a schedule!

I best close and be about my business. Maybe I should say, "Daddy's business". Lately it seems like we've both been running a marathon to keep up with his many job-related responsibilities. This Saturday we host the reception and I've been preparing shopping and menu lists in preparation for that occasion. Becky is coming Friday with her food processor (and Madison) to help me with the chicken

salad. I really appreciate her efforts to lighten my load. Feeding 150 dignitaries in the Snake River Library leaves something to be desired and always challenges me. It has to be quick, delicious, relatively easily served, and not messy. There are special problems with not having a kitchen to work out of and every year I dread all the hauling in of coolers, decorations, etc. for the set-up and then hauling them all back out a few hours later. Thank goodness for Tim and SaraKay and their willing hands.

May 17, 1999

[Mom] Daddy and I survived the week and are grateful to be through with our Scout VIP reception and recognition night for another year. This year I decided to serve chicken salad in a croissant along with a fresh fruit cup and Cherry 7up. I was able to order the fruit from Albertsons already cut up so all I had to prepare was the chicken salad, which proved to be no small task. Becky offered to come on Friday to help me cut up celery, onions, and chicken. We started about 9:30 that morning and I was still cutting and mixing at 4:30 that afternoon. When Maddie lost patience with the project after several hours, I convinced Becky to take her home and get them both down for a nap. She was certainly a great help and reduced my work load considerably. I realized as the day progressed that my kitchen wasn't geared for cooking for 200. I needed an industrial strength mixer to handle the 12 pounds of cream cheese and a food processor to chop things up with. I decided that I wouldn't attempt that menu again another year.

Saturday was chaotic for all of us as we picked up food in Idaho Falls, gathered up the things at Albertsons, packed the salad in ice in coolers, and then transported everything into the library at the high school. I just couldn't have done it without Tim and SaraKay helping out all day.

The good news was that the reception was the best one we have ever had. Daddy was pleased with the wonderful response to the invitations he sent out. We prepared to feed 200 and fed around 150. The guests were very complimentary of the food and it almost (I said almost) made our Friday marathon worth it. Tim, SaraKay, and I were finished and had the library cleaned up by 8 that evening but Daddy's responsibilities kept him there until after ten. When he arrived home he had several

messages awaiting him regarding scout camp and a stake Young Men's service project for tomorrow. I keep thinking life is going to settle down a little for us but I'm not sure if it will until Daddy leaves for Island Park the second week in June.

Yesterday we celebrated Grandpa Larsen's birthday with a dinner and family gathering here. Everyone brought something to contribute to the meal and we had a wonderful time. Following dinner, we gathered in the living room for a program and some personal tributes to Grandpa. It was so sweet to hear the stories of the extended family members.

It was pretty wild getting ready for both of our big events but when the party was over, I think we were all grateful that we had persisted and found a night for it. We've been trying ever since they arrived home to find a time that would work for all of us. Grandpa kept saying that he would be 80 all year and that we could celebrate any time, but Terry and I both felt like we didn't want to get too far away from his birthday.

This morning I have been on the phone doing some reminder calls about the school board election tomorrow. Caryn Esplin and Chris Jensen are both running a pretty intense campaign and it will be interesting to see how it all turns out. I wish that tomorrow night was my last board meeting but I think I still have another month or so to function. Linnea Hammond approached me again about forming a committee to address the issues we are facing with our band program and I promised her I would try to get something done on that before I finished up. There has been a lot of shuffling in the district with teachers and buildings and patrons are voicing concerns as the year winds down. It's like this each spring—a flurry of interest regarding the different programs and problems.

We received a call from John yesterday. They arrived in Connecticut on Saturday, making the long trip without incident. When they went out Saturday evening to go to the grocery store, their car wouldn't start. They used jumper cables and got it going but Sunday morning the problem reoccurred so they had to get it fixed before attending their meetings. They were grateful that they weren't stranded somewhere between Ohio and Connecticut and that they made the trip safely. Their new ward is diverse

but everyone welcomed them and made them feel right at home. John said that the services are in both Spanish and English and there were a lot of different nationalities represented in the congregation. Quite a change from their traditional situation in Provo! They were excited to get acquainted and meet some of the people that Laurel's sister, Becky, referred them to when she and her husband did an internship in that same location last summer. What a coincidence!

I best close. I am supposed to be to a reception for the retiring school teachers this afternoon.

[Dad] Tonight for home evening we worked on a mailing for Young Men of our stake modeled after a mission call, inviting them to a Mini-MTC experience on June 12. We are going to mimic the MTC with their parents bringing them to the Stake Center, having a short devotional, and then having the parents leave one side of the chapel and the young men go out the other side. Then we will have a series of workshops for them based on teaching experiences in the MTC and conclude with a dinner and talk by Rollie Walker, former mission president in Chile. There should be ample opportunity for the young men to be touched by the Spirit through the course of the day and be more spiritually and emotionally prepared for the rigors of the MTC.

After that we had a Book of Mormon word search and an exercise that helped us get into the first chapter of Mosiah. At a ward conference youth fireside last night I saw a video with Elder Eyring talking about the Book of Mormon and the answers that are contained in its pages for virtually any kind of problem you may have enter your life. There is no doubt in my mind of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and its divine source!

Sunday was a ward Conference visit for me and my YM's Presidency. I know quite a few of the young men in Riverside 2nd and it was rewarding to be able to share a message with them. Next week is the ward conference for Moreland 6th and we are looking forward to a temple session on Thursday and conference on Sunday.

Last Saturday was the Council Recognition Night and the VIP reception that I have been responsible for the past several years. I spent all day at the SRHS auditorium decorating the stage and getting everything ready. The theme

was a patriotic one and we hung a flag that covered the whole back end of the stage as well as bunting and bows and flags. It was a powerful red, white, and blue night.

Tomorrow night we are having a stake YM service project and feeding them hotdogs, chips and cookies for refreshments. We are getting to be quite the caterers.

April 26, 1999

[Mom] Saturday I received a phone call from Grandma Richards telling me that Saturday morning Grandpa had experienced some sort of seizure. She was helping him get his apron on and she noticed that his eyes were rolling back into his head. His mouth seemed a little contorted and his head drooped. She spoke to him but he didn't respond. The whole episode only lasted about a half a minute. He seemed to come out of it as quickly as it happened and with no ill effects. She didn't know what to do. At first, she thought it was a stroke but after talking it through with Charles, they decided that it was probably more like a seizure. He didn't seem to have any memory loss or function loss after the episode. She is going to take him in for tests this week and have some scans done to check for heart or stroke problems. It was very unnerving and yet she felt like the right thing to do was to wait until today so that she could notify their regular physician and have him decide about tests. I have called each day to check on them but everything seems to have returned to normal. Their departure for Arizona has been moved up to July 1st and SaraKay and I will probably be driving their car down in caravan with Dick and Kathy who will be taking some of their stuff in a U-Haul and also moving Abby down to attend graduate school in Tempe at ASU. If our plans go as scheduled, I'm hoping to spend some time with David and Andrea and family as well as see Lisa and Don while settling Mom and Dad in. I will return with Kathy and Dick a few days later.

When I went to walk with Janet this morning it was so hot by 9 a.m. that we were both sweating from the heat as well as the workout. What a change in temperature from two weeks ago when it snowed! Today it is supposed to reach the mid 80's. I guess summer has arrived. It was nice last week to have some warm days to plant flowers and put out my bedding plants. Daddy has been watering the lawn and we irrigated the

pasture last Thursday for the first time this spring. Our little windbreak is growing and we are encouraged with how our yard looks. Tim has been so good to do most of the lawn mowing for us these past weeks and last Saturday he and Daddy spent the better part of the day cutting up the old pallets and scrap lumber that had accumulated by the wood box. Although their efforts were certainly needed, the work tied Daddy's back up in knots and left him aching and sore. He came in and took some back medication, slept for three hours and has been dragging himself around for the last three days. This morning he said that he was feeling a little better and was encouraged. He is driving to Denver this weekend with some camp staffers in the scout van and he hopes he can feel good.

Last week proved to be a difficult one for me with school board concerns and controversies and with the election on Tuesday. I had come out in open support of Caryn Esplin for the school board and I had also delivered fliers and made phone calls for her. It was a pretty intense campaign but when the voting was completed, she won quite handily. She was relieved and pleased and invited all of us to her home for a dessert buffet Wednesday evening. She had quite a group of supporters there and it was fun to talk politics for a while. I have felt a great relief since the election even though I am officially not finished up until July. I'm sure I can refer any calls to Caryn since she will be the one making the major decisions come July and with school nearly over, things aren't nearly as hectic and tense.

Tuesday night our school board meeting was a difficult one. I was aware that we had a wrestling group coming to petition us to permit them to take a trip to Nevada for a national competition. They knew that what they were asking was against school policy since we have a travel policy that states unless a student has qualified in state competition to compete nationally such as with FFA, FHA, or SPA, they cannot go. High school wrestling has a state program with various competitions but it does not continue to the national level. Many of the really fine wrestlers will attend and compete in various summer national tournaments all through their high school years where they can enter as individuals and build their reputation that way as well as compete in our District and State programs provided by the schools. This

booster group had already approached the school principal regarding this trip and been told it was too far to travel and that it was against school policy. They then organized to approach the school board and privately lobbied two board members who were wrestling fans. I saw the trip on the agenda and made an appointment with Tracy Thompson the high school principal to visit with him about his role and stance on the issue. Tuesday morning, I spent a very informative time in his office reaffirming my position that trips beyond our policy limit were a burden to the school district in a number of ways.

That afternoon I received a phone call from DarVel Anderson asking my advice on this because he hadn't been approached but he had sensed that the booster club was well organized and prepared in their presentation. As we visited, he and I felt the same regarding economic considerations and the importance of upholding our policy. The situation was made more poignant by the fact that two other groups, the drama department and the Chambers had come with similar requests a few months ago and as a board we had voted unanimously to uphold the policy.

To make a long story short, the debate was pretty intense and although DarVel and I held our ground, the three other board members voted to let them go. It was a tense situation with the board room filled with wrestlers, parents, administrators from the high school and other interested parties. When the evening was over, I felt like I had taken a beating.

For several days after that I mentally went over the proceedings in my mind, weighing the pros and cons, and wondering what we could have done differently to have swayed the vote. Two days after the meeting I began to have different individuals come to me, expressing their feelings about what had happened that night. The more people that expressed support, the more grateful I was that I had been consistent and not backed down. It was about as political a situation as I have encountered on my time on the board.

I am looking forward to Shauntel and Camille's visit this week. They are scheduled to arrive Wednesday evening and stay a couple of weeks, dividing their time between the Andersons and us. I think Randy's brother, Taggart, is having his

mission farewell on Memorial weekend Sunday and she will be able to be a part of the family festivities for that occasion as well as be here for Tim's graduation. Bonnie and family will come on Tuesday, June 2nd, and we are going to get the bunch of us together to visit the zoo, go swimming, and have a picnic or two. What fun! Daddy will leave for Denver on Friday the 28th and won't return until June 5th so he will miss some of the fun. He is hoping to get to spend some time with Uncle Mark while he is in Denver and that will be a treat for him.

Today was "Senior Sluff Day" and tomorrow they go to Lagoon. For all intents and purposes, Tim's high school career is over and the classwork finished. He has one of his final student body assignments completed with the social tonight and he is overjoyed to see that come to an end. He has carried a big load this year with all his responsibilities, both school and church. Yesterday was a typical Sunday for him. He had a presidency meeting at 9:30, choir practice at 10, sacrament meeting and performance at 10:30, other meetings until 1, home teaching at 3, home teachers at 4, stake youth ward conference fireside at 5, meeting with priest quorum advisors at 6, baccalaureate at 7. He's sure been a good sport about all his Sunday meetings and responsibilities. I think he will soon be released as stake youth chairman and that will make a big difference, too.

[Dad] Life presses on, regardless of physical limitations that say "slow down." Sue mentioned my back being tied up in knots after our Saturday efforts. It is hard to describe how painful it is and how hard it is to keep pushing onward while in a fuzzy funk from the medication that is supposed to relax the muscles so that it won't hurt. Yesterday was a full and rewarding day as we met as a presidency and then performed our visitation duties with the Moreland 6th Ward.

We had a great turnout for our stake YM service project last week. We cleaned up and painted all the bleachers at the stake ball fields; cleaned up all the excess dirt and weeds around the ball field fences and backstop; cleaned and painted the restrooms; cleaned out the concession booth; cleaned and organized the storage room with tables and chairs for check out. I kept busy cooking hotdogs on a grill and feeding the starving masses of young men. There were a few extra items painted such as dogs, bikes,

boys, and sidewalk, but all in all, it was an extremely successful event.

I got the mailing put together and sent out for our James E. West campaign. I kept crashing computers until I pulled it down to more manageable bites and worked it through. I hope that I will get the intended help from members of the Endowment Committee to insure reaching our goals. At the Executive Board meeting on Thursday night I received about six commitments from members of the board to do a James E. West Fellowship award.

This week I have to get things wrapped up so that I can leave Friday for a week and go to National Camp School and learn how to run a camp. I had a scare last week when my COPE Director quit. But through the result of some phone calls the previous week I was able to make connections with a perfect replacement. I sure hope I don't get many more surprises on staffing. I don't know if I can keep pulling rabbits out of a hat to replace them.

June 2, 1999

[Mom] It's 6:30 a.m. and the house is quiet. I kept thinking yesterday that there would be time to get this family letter written and sent but the day proved to be too busy and chaotic. When Daddy left last Friday morning for his Camp School in Colorado he left a multitude of things for me to complete. He had been up Thursday night until nearly 3 a.m. trying to finish things up so he could leave but there were just too many details and projects and despite his best efforts and late nights, he left a lot of loose ends that I have been trying to tie up.

Shaunte! arrived from Iowa on Wednesday evening and attended Tim's seminary graduation with us. Although Camille had spent a lot of time confined in the car on both Tuesday and Wednesday, she was still in pretty good spirits and we managed to make it through the graduation okay. Thursday morning I had arranged to take our water turn so that we wouldn't be trying to irrigate while we were attending Tim's graduation. I donned Daddy's big wader boots and took a shovel and successfully set the irrigation dam for the first time in my life. When the water arrived in the ditch, my dam held and I was proud of myself. While I was outside taking care of the watering Shaunte! brought me the phone and I took a call from an angry patron who was displeased with

what was happening as far as seating the top students at graduation. That was the first of many, many calls that morning that occupied nearly four hours of my time. Luckily, thanks to the cordless phone, I was able to carry on with many of my morning responsibilities while I tried to calm down parents regarding their concerns.

Before the day was over, I felt like I had about had it with being on the school board and my decision to take a break from public service was confirmed. All that aside, graduation went well and it was wonderful to have Shaunte!, Grandpa and Grandma Larsen, and Becky and Chet there to cheer Tim on. When we arrived about 7 and received a program, I discovered that Tim had been awarded the Frank Wada Memorial scholarship. It is for \$500 and is given to a student who is exemplary in service to the school and community. Tim had learned of it that morning but had not told me. He thought it would be a nice surprise. It was. He is certainly deserving and pleased to add the money to his college account. Following graduation Daddy came home to complete preparations for his trip and I stayed to help put up chairs and prepare for the all-night party. My part included clean-up on Friday morning at 5 a.m. and so I got up and went to the school at five to help mop floors and get the school ready for the last day of classes. At seven I drove Daddy in to the Blackfoot scout office and he caught his ride for the Denver trip. He felt badly about not having more time with Shaunte! before leaving but that was the way it worked out.

Friday afternoon Becky, Madison, Shaunte!, Camille, SaraKay and I made a trip to Rexburg to pick up some invitations to an endowment dinner on the 12th and did a bunch of errands coming and going. It gave us a while to visit and we enjoyed the chance to be together. Shaunte! spent most of Saturday and Sunday with Randy's family since Randy's brother, Taggart, is leaving on a mission. It was fun for Shaunte! to be able to be a part of it all. It would have been so fun for Randy to have been able to have been there, too, but his busy schedule at the hospital won't allow much time off and he is hoping to convince the staff to let him have time off for our reunion in August.

Over the weekend SaraKay and I worked on the mailer that needed to be mailed yesterday and completed that. I was also able to meet with Dan Wallace on Sunday and finalize plans for

the dinner on the 12th at the Mini MTC the stake is hosting. I had accepted a responsibility to speak to a combined Priesthood/Relief Society meeting Sunday during our block of meetings and that assignment went well. We visited Grandma Gooch's and Grandma Larsen's graves despite the blustery and rainy weather. It has been a sweet experience to do that each year.

For home evening we visited Becky and Chet and lounged in their hot tub. It is a fun activity for all ages and Camille and Madison enjoyed it, too.

Yesterday we made a quick trip to Pocatello to mail the invitations and I was able to get a letter to all the ward young men's presidents giving them the schedule and assignments for the dinner during the activity on the 12th. It will certainly be a relief to get Daddy home and have him near a phone to help take calls. He has had a multitude of calls coming in regarding camp, service projects, staffing, and sundry other items. He is scheduled to attend a state republican meeting for several hours on Saturday in Pocatello but I'm trying to find a substitute for him since he is returning to some pressing concerns that will need his immediate attention. His first week at camp is June 14th and he continues to have members of his staff change their minds and back out of their contracts. What a hassle and worry at this late date!

Bonnie and three arrived yesterday and we enjoyed letting the kids play in a new little swimming pool we purchased. Despite the lack of sunshine they enjoyed the activity. We were scheduled to go to SaraKay's ball game but it was canceled due to rain. We have planned to spend the day today at the zoo but the weather is still threatening and I'm not sure it is going to clear off.

Tim is back at Basic. He has been selling things over the Internet during his days off and has also been going through his room and doing some sorting and cleaning. Wonderful! He told me yesterday that I wouldn't believe how much he has accumulated these last few years. I assured him that I had a pretty good idea based on the condition of things in his room. I'm glad he's getting a head start on it. He'll need most of the summer!

June 8, 1999

[Mom] Daddy left this morning to scout things out with his program director at Island Park. He found out yesterday that the High Adventure week did not have sufficient sign-ups to justify having it so his time at camp has been reduced a week and he will not be going until June 27th instead of the 21st. Last night he was on the phone notifying his staff of the change. Hopefully he won't lose some staff members because of the delayed starting date. It seems like every day someone else calls and cancels.

We had a fun but hectic week with Shauntel and Bonnie and families here. We braved the weather and still went to the zoo and saw more animals than ever before. The cooler temperatures coaxed the animals out of their caves and so we were able to see nearly all of the big cats that are usually holed up. Following the zoo, we went to a community park for our picnic; it was so cold and blustery.

SaraKay was disappointed that it was cold and rainy for most of the week. We had purchased a wading pool and had hoped the weather would cooperate so that the children could play in the water, but it never warmed up enough. It was fun to watch Camille interact with Rachel, Nathan and Christine. She adjusted to the additional family quickly and followed the kids around where ever they went. She was fascinated with all the activity!

Sunday evening and Monday Shauntel stayed at Archibald's and today she is in Idaho Falls with Becky. Her traveling companions will be leaving early Friday morning for Iowa so her vacation will soon be drawing to a close. We have so enjoyed having her and Camille here with us for a couple weeks!

My last school board meeting is tonight and I am looking forward to putting that aside. This Saturday is the stake YM Mini MTC from 8 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Becky and Chet are two of the class presenters and I am in charge of the dinner. Dad had one of the presenters back out over the weekend and after talking through the possible replacements, we both felt like Chet would be the best for the assignment. He and Becky are such able and willing good sports to help us out whenever there is a need. They are such an exemplary young couple and we are always proud of the job they do.

If Chet ever gets transferred to Korea, we are really going to miss them. As some of you are aware, the month that they moved to Idaho Falls the local calling area was extended to include Idaho Falls and Pocatello and Becky and I have joked about the change being put into place because the telephone company knew she was moving to Idaho Falls and needed free phoning.

Saturday afternoon is the endowment dinner for the council. My responsibilities are limited and I am going to relax and enjoy it. It will be held at Tautphaus Park and the evening is entitled "Dine with the Animals". There is a Dutch oven dinner and then some of the zoo keepers present a short program showing us the various animals. Following that we will attend an antique car show. Daddy has had so much stress the last few weeks; following this Saturday, a lot of his concerns can be put aside.

Several of you have asked regarding Mike and Julie. Julie is in Portland and has accepted a position there with an accounting firm. Mike encouraged her to take the job since he has not felt ready for marriage. He has been dating some other girls and feels like his decision to break off with Julie is the right one although it has been an emotional roller coaster for them both. He has been working part-time and this week is interviewing for a position with FARMS on campus. It would be better pay and more hours than his present job and would be located on campus and easy to get to and from. He has arranged housing for fall in a complex by the stadium and is in the process of registering for another summer term. His plan is to finish up at the "Y" in December of 2000 and have until fall of 2001 to get his finances together for dental school. He will be taking the DAT a year from now and has been working with an advisor to see that his classes are in line with his goals. He has appreciated your phone calls and concern. Some days he feels a bit overwhelmed with what lies ahead and the uncertainty of things, but the Lord has really blessed him.

I am making plans to go to Arizona the second weekend of July. I will caravan with Kathy and Dick who will be taking Abby to Tempe for her graduate program at ASU. They will have a U-Haul with Grandpa and Grandma's things. I will be going to Salt Lake to help Mom and Dad finish up preparations for the move and help them get their condo closed up. They will fly to Phoenix and Lisa and Don will get them on that

end while Kathy and I transport their car, clothes, and a few furnishings. Most of their furnishings will stay in the condo. Don has found a hydraulic chair and a hospital bed for Grandpa so that they don't have to move those items. Plan A is for me to drive Grandpa and Grandma's car and arrive at Lisa's Saturday evening, July 10th. I will stay there until Monday night and then go to David and Andrea's for two days and drive back to Salt Lake with Andrea and her three children. She is going to take a couple of weeks to enjoy visiting her family and also to spend some time with us here. I will return on the 17th.

[Dad] Last night I went to one of SaraKay's ball games. She does a pretty good job of fielding and was able to get a hit every time she got up to bat. I think her confidence is building and it is a good thing for her to have this kind of experience being a team player. Yesterday I visited the Zoo and the garage where the antique and classic autos are for Saturday's Heritage Society event.

Camp was beautiful! Sam and Chris are excited about being up there and we were able to get a few things done, like hauling in all the fire extinguishers and ammunition and hauling out six of the mountain bikes that were most in need of attention. I am going to have to go back up tomorrow and help to get more done in preparation for Wood Badge coming in this weekend and next week.

Last week was great at Pleasant Valley Scout Ranch. I was able to see Mark and Jeff for a few minutes a week ago last Friday on our way to the camp. We ate at Ho Ho's, an oriental place Mark recommended, before traveling on down to the camp, and really enjoyed it. The meals at Chris Dobbins, the specific camp where we were, are fed family style with tables of eight. The food is prepared under contract with Marriott Food Services and was quite good. The classes were conducted in various sites around the camp. My classes for Management were in the "Branding Iron" which serves as a staff lounge area during camp. We had 17 in our section and I learned a lot from the classes and the interaction with the other Camp Directors, many of whom had years of experience. I felt pretty good about my level of experience and preparation for the job. We had some good interaction with the nine other staff people from Grand Teton Council who were there. We even

had a couple of hours of free time one day when three of us went looking for arrowheads. We found quite a bit of petrified wood, but no arrowheads. All the walking was good for me as I was able to lose five pounds during the week.

June 14, 1999

[Dad] Tonight for family home evening we played a game that SaraKay had spent quite a bit of time on. We took turns closing our eyes and reaching our hands through a hole in a box and trying to guess what we felt in the bowl. Tim went first and guessed correctly that he was feeling raw egg. I couldn't recognize the feel of SaraKay's gel and Mom couldn't guess the feel of mustard and lastly, SaraKay didn't recognize the feel of osterized pears. Then we discussed our senses and how important they are and then how important it is for us to recognize the promptings of the Spirit.

Reference was made to one of my favorite scriptures, 1 Nephi 17:45, and being past feeling—that it is through our feelings that the Spirit speaks to us and we need to avoid things that dull our sensitivity and take advantage of things that heighten our awareness or sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit.

Saturday's Mini-MTC was a resounding success. There were about 50 boys who were uplifted by the seminars taught by Becky & Scott Poole, Chet, the English missionaries, and Chris Kelly. Midmorning we had a relay race in the cultural hall where they had to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, drink a glass of milk, tie a tie, look up a scripture drawn from a bowl, and pick up some clothes, then put them on a hangar and button the top button of the shirt. It was a fun break and a way to get them some refreshment to keep them going. At noon, we joined in a potato bar lunch and heard from President Rollie Walker, former president of the Chile Santiago West mission.

We had about enough time to change our clothes and leave for Tautphaus Park Zoo and take care of the Scouting Heritage Society business meeting and dinner. We had a delicious Dutch oven dinner, prepared by Dave Hansen. We then went to see a car exhibit at Kevin Gall's (owner of Farr's Ice Cream). We were able to sit in a Delorean, 3 Corvette convertibles, a Viper, a Ferrari Testerosa, a T-bird, a model T, a model T ice cream truck, a Rolls Royce golf cart, and so on. It was a fun

thing to do on a beautiful afternoon. We had a coach arranged to bus us to the cars and back, and that proved to be a nice feature of our evening.

Last week is mostly just a blur, but I feel blessed to have the camp up and running enough for the Wood Badge course that is in there this week. I got the refrigeration guy to connect up all the coolers on Thursday. Wood Badge moved their stuff in on Friday and sometime during the day the freezer quit, so I had to track him down again that night and get him back up to camp. Today I hauled a 600 lb. gun safe up to camp that we were able to get with a grant from the NRA. I was also able to work with Rick Tew, David Smith, and Stephen Baldwin to cook dinner for the 58 participants, 17 staff, and six guests.

[Mom] Daddy has given you a brief capsulation of our weekend's activities. I had worked most of the week to have the food planned, purchased, prepared and delivered and by the time Saturday was over, I was totally bushed. We had three receptions to attend Saturday night so I came home from Tautphaus with Grandpa Larsen and hurried to attend two while Daddy finished up at the scout activity and then joined me for the reception for Andy Davis. It made for a full and exhausting day for us. I had been so busy throughout the week that I hadn't taken my watering turn on Thursday and when temperatures hit the 80's yesterday, I regretted it.

Shauntel left Thursday night for Tremonton to join the family caravanning east with her. She and Camille spent a restless night before leaving about five the next morning. The other group had several adult drivers and she was hoping to get some good relief on the return trip from the stress of driving, but even though there were plenty of drivers, they were a reluctant bunch and she still ended up behind the wheel for nearly 20 hours. They pulled into Coralville at 4 a.m. on Saturday morning. The next few days were pretty miserable as she and Camille both tried to recover from the "jet-lag" of the trip. We were so relieved to receive word of their safe arrival home. Her time here with us was so enjoyable! Camille is a ray of sunshine.

Shauntel spent a couple days with Becky and Chet before she returned and even helped Becky strip some wall paper from the bathroom.

The saga of the rabbits came to an abrupt end yesterday. On Friday the mother gave birth to six beautiful baby bunnies and we watched with excitement as they started getting some fur and wiggled around in the cage.

Yesterday SaraKay was playing with Hillary at the Ellis' and I was mowing the lawn. I decided to take a peek at them. All of them were dead. The mother had gnawed away at them, killing them all. I was so upset and knew how sad SaraKay would be so I quickly gathered up the babies and disposed of them before SaraKay returned home. I called and had her come home and I told her what had happened. We put the mother and father in a big box and turned them loose at the gravel pits where there would be ample water and grass for them. When we first took them out of the box, they just stood there looking at us and eventually they hopped away and started eating some grass. Hopefully they will adjust to their newly acquired freedom and enjoy it. As for us, we are going to put aside rabbit raising for now.

My thoughts have been on Paul the last few days since hearing Justin Murray report his mission last Sunday. He was an outstanding missionary and his testimony of the Savior was so moving. That evening Greg Jenks and his sister, Amy, reported their missions in a ward fireside. They were visiting from the Tri Cities area in Washington and were just here for a few days and so it wasn't possible to schedule them for an official sacrament meeting report. Greg had lived here with the Jenks family for two years following his father's death and so there were a lot of ward members and youth leaders who were grateful for the opportunity to hear him report on his mission to Mexico.

All day Sunday I kept thinking about Paul and how quickly his time in the field is passing. Paul's letters have been brief, he has been very faithful in writing and we look forward each week to hearing from him.

I've been on the phone this morning with Lisa. She and Don are making the arrangements for Grandpa and Grandma's arrival next month. Grandpa's legs are losing strength and it is becoming nearly impossible for Grandma to help him. We are all hoping that this move will be the answer. I would like to see them come here and I think I could get things ready to accommodate them with a little notice and

some shuffling of bedrooms. When I go to Lisa's next month we can talk over the options. Until then I hope and pray Mom can handle things okay. I know that they are both concerned about imposing but I know that we would love to repay them for all the acts of service and kindness they have rendered to us over our lifetimes.

June 22, 1999

[Mom] It's enjoyable to type up Paul's letters. I was especially touched by his account of referring to the conversion of Archibald Gardner. I had a similar experience when we were working with the Mexicans. Most of you will remember Sergio Prada Ayala. He was a young man who joined the church through our fellowshiping efforts and eventually attended Ricks College and married a girl from Missouri. They were married in the Idaho Falls Temple and we helped host a reception dinner for them. His mother and sister came from Chihuahua for the event and his mother, Maria, cooked up the meal in our kitchen. That was quite an experience for me since she couldn't speak English and we were trying to communicate well enough to prepare a meal for about 80 guests.

Earlier when we took Sergio for his patriarchal blessing and Patriarch Stander placed his hands on his head, I had the distinct impression that we had not baptized one (Sergio) but a nation (his descendants). It was an awesome thought! I know Paul was inspired to relate the story of Archibald's conversion. Literally thousands of descendants have been born into the church because of his courage in accepting the gospel four generations ago. Sometimes new converts don't really appreciate the gravity of their decision and the impact it will have in both time and eternity. No wonder the Lord has revealed that nothing will be of greater worth or bring more joy than bringing souls to Christ.

We had a relaxed and enjoyable Father's Day. We invited Grandpa and Alva Lu to join us for dinner as well as Becky and Chet. It is unusual to have Grandpa and Grandma all to ourselves and we thoroughly enjoyed it. They have just completed two weeks of mission farewells, weddings, and receptions for several of Alva Lu's grandchildren and she has hosted a houseful of company from Washington and southern Utah. It has been a hectic but rewarding time for them. It was a pleasure to have them here for a few hours and honor

Grandpa as well as Daddy and Chet on their special day. It was nice to receive greetings from many of you children as well throughout the day. The father in this home certainly is deserving of our praise and love. He has always been kind and loving and willing to put the family's welfare ahead of his own desires.

Last week Daddy and I attended my last school board function. We had dinner at an Inn in the American Falls area attended by the Superintendent and Asst. Supt., school board members and spouses. I was presented with a nice plaque and some kind words were said in my behalf. I guess another era has come and gone in my life. It's not without some mixed emotions that this comes to a close for me. Someone asked me what I was going to do with all my time now that I was retiring. It seemed a little strange to admit that I didn't have any definite plans except that I was looking forward to having more time to do some of the same things I have been doing all along. It has felt good to have the time for yard and garden and even time to get a little more organized in my home. That doesn't sound very exciting, but after being in such a hurry for the last 33 years I am hoping for some discretionary time.

Last Thursday and Friday I babysat Madison while Becky went with her ward youth on a Pioneer Trek. Originally, I was going to have her for Thursday only but Chet's boss needed him in Seattle at the last minute and when Chet mentioned that he had previously committed to taking some time off to help out at home, his boss offered to pay for babysitting if he would consent to go. Well, as it turned out I received a check from Meleleuca for two nights and two days worth of watching Madison.

I felt a little sheepish about getting paid to do such a sweet job, but the extra cash has come in handy and SaraKay and I both were able to purchase some things we have wanted. Madison is such an easy little girl to have around and she was especially responsive to SaraKay. She played outside, went on stroller rides, jumped on the trampoline, played hide-and-seek, and a lot of other activities that we all enjoyed. She is walking and is a little person instead of a baby. We thoroughly enjoyed her.

This Thursday Steph and Linds and family will be arriving for a short visit. We have been planning some outings that will make their stay a fun one.

Although our family reunions are special, it's nice for me to have some good one-on-one time. We received a call from Jonie and she and Jeff and family have decided to try to come to the August reunion so that was wonderful news.

Someone once said that special holidays and celebrations give us a chance to think about life and reflect on where we've been and where we're going. I have done some reflecting this past month as we have celebrated birthdays for so many of you. I think back on my life since marrying Daddy and I think of all the hard times we had trying to keep pace with family, career, and church. I know that to many people looking at our situation, we probably seemed to be pretty chaotic and wild, but throughout the years I have felt like we had "chosen the good part" and that the truly important things were in place in our lives. Now that life is less hectic, I'm so grateful that we focused on family and church activity and that each of you came into our family circle. Each of you are precious to us and of inestimable worth. We love you and appreciate the lives you are living and your efforts to be obedient and give service. May the Lord bless you in your homes and in your relationships that you may feel His continuing love and acceptance of your offerings. We love you. Mom

[Dad] Amen to Mom's comments above! But I can't agree with the statement about now that things are a little less hectic—things continue to be hectic and everyday full of decisions and actions that must be taken before the day is done. I am excited about camp and think that we are going to have an outstanding camp opportunity and program for the troops that come to Island Park. I am enjoying those that I have recruited and am working with to make things happen.

Thanks to each of you for remembering Father's Day. Thanks for your cards and tokens. It's certainly satisfying to be a Dad with such an outstanding posterity.

June 28, 1999

[Mom] Daddy left Sunday afternoon about four for Island Park and his summer camp assignment. The few days before he left were full of last-minute details and he worked long hours to get things ready for his departure. He was back and forth so many times in the last two weeks that on Wednesday he decided to

spent the night and avoided the four-hour trip he would have had to make again on Thursday. Although it is a scenic trip, it gets pretty tiresome. I have a phone number for the camp and it isn't long distance so hopefully we can keep close. He called Monday and seemed in good spirits. I was relieved since he was so worn out and tired when he left Sunday afternoon.

Stephani and Linds and family have been here with us for a few days and they have kept things lively. They are such a fun family and kept us laughing with their quick wit and humor. When they left this morning, SaraKay commented on how quiet it was in our house. We really enjoyed their stay! We went swimming, saw Star Wars, and even had a campfire and wiener roast for home evening last night.

Becky and Madison came for the afternoon and went swimming with us before our cookout. It was fun to see her interact with Steph's three. SaraKay thoroughly enjoyed having Katie, Sam and Josh to play with and they really packed each day with a host of fun activities. I think their favorite activity was the trampoline and they kept it busy from morning until the last thing at night.

Tim is working a few day shifts at Basic and it has made life a little more tolerable for him. He played in a two-stake softball tournament last weekend and their team took first place. It is such a source of satisfaction to see our ward teachers and priests build their quorum unity. Most of the families were there to support them.

Last week I received a phone call from Paul letting us know that he was going to be released about the 26th of August. It was a relief to get that information. We worried that Paul's president had forgotten that he promised Paul that he would get him back in time to start college on August 30th.

When we didn't hear anything, we decided to call the mission office and we found out that they had forgotten that he needed an early release date and were planning on him coming home later in September. The Elder I visited with relayed to me the message from President Cardon that I would need to call again when the new president took over on the first of July. That concerned me since our agreement was with President Cardon and I felt like a new president wouldn't be aware of the conversations we had regarding the situation. I voiced my concerns

and the next morning Paul called and reassured me that they had set up an additional release date the end of August for him and several others that were needing to enter school. It won't leave us much chance to take care of getting him outfitted but it won't be too big of a problem since he will be at Ricks and able to come home a little more frequently.

SaraKay is getting her braces on. She will be required to wear extensive head gear whenever she is home and at night. She has some problems with her jaw that we're hoping to fix early so that it will not take extensive work later on. She is anxious to get going with the treatment and be well on the way by the time school starts. This morning as she was getting ready to practice the violin, the hair on the bow broke and so we are trying to find a place to take it for repairs. Sometimes I feel like if it's not one thing, it's another. Hopefully it won't be too expensive.

We have a fun weekend ahead with Mike coming home for the Fourth and Steve and Bonnie coming on Saturday to spend the night. My class reunion is on Saturday night and then on Monday we have tickets to attend the concert, buffet, and fireworks show sponsored by Melaleuca in Idaho Falls, courtesy of Becky and Chet. It will certainly be a treat for us to participate in the celebration with them, our only regret being that Daddy won't be able to come since he will be at camp. It should really be fun! Hopefully all of you will have an enjoyable and safe holiday. I am making plans for my trip to Arizona next week and trying to get things in order so Tim can handle things in my absence. I'm sure he'll get along fine. I will be relieved to get my folks to Lisa's and in a situation where Grandma Ilene will have some daily support and help with Grandpa.

July 21, 1999

[Mom] SaraKay and I have had a busy two days since Daddy and Tim left Sunday afternoon for Island Park; Daddy for his weekly camp director assignment and Tim for a two-day stay with friends and family of one of his girlfriends, Janalee Thompson. Her extended family has a cabin in Island Park and her parents offered to host her and some close friends for a couple days of fishing and water skiing. I was grateful that Tim was able to get off work to go. He has had a pretty intense summer with working 40

hours a week and running a business on the side.

His internet business has run into a snag. The other day he was denied access to the internet. He called the Hot line and the fellow he visited with told him it sounded like some hackers were into our system. He has a contact at Basic American who is going to come over and check it out for us but until this fellow recovers from falling down the stairs, he isn't able to oblige. (This is beginning to sound like a James Bond movie). Tim's suffering withdrawal now that he can't check his stock and run his business. Luckily our e-mail is still up and running and he is able to keep in touch with his contacts that way.

Yesterday SaraKay and I picked and podded peas, picked berries, mowed lawn, finished a flag for the King Benjamin Encampment this weekend, and went shopping and to Tautphaus Park with Becky and Madison. Becky and Chet gave SaraKay some tickets to Tautphaus Fun Land for her birthday and so we went to give her a chance to go on the rides with Madison. It was a fun experience and relaxing respite from our harried weekend.

The summer is quickly passing and the list of things to do before reunion time is growing bigger by the day. Today we finished off all those projects we started yesterday and got the water on the lawn. The weather is finally getting hot and it doesn't take much heat to make the place start to wither!

Last Saturday SaraKay and I rode with two of Dad's co-workers to Island Park Camp to attend a special dinner for all the Executive Council. This meeting is held annually at one of the camps and gives the council an opportunity to invite their spouses for an evening at a camp facility and a nice meal and update on the things going on in the Grand Teton Council. I wondered if Daddy was a little bit nervous about having so many of the "big wigs" of the area coming to his camp, but when we arrived everything looked great and the dinner was scrumptious! I overheard several of the men compliment Daddy on the condition of the camp and on the many improvements he had made. I could tell it meant a lot to Daddy and we had a chance to visit about it en route home following the meeting.

He said that he and the camp ranger, Elmo Dial, are just a couple of old farmers, going about fixing things and having a great time. Daddy is very pleased with most of his staff and feels like he is effective as director. He is especially pleased with the fellow who runs his high adventure obstacle course and his program director. They have really proven invaluable to him. It was fun for me to get to be a part of the scene for an evening and soak in some of the praise that was directed at Daddy. I think when all is said and done, it has been a very rewarding experience for him and one he may have the opportunity to have again. I don't think he would be nearly so overwhelmed with it another year especially since he has kept a lot of his handouts, booklets, and other supplies and can reuse them another year.

It seemed like everyone that Daddy introduced us to made a big fuss over SaraKay. They told her what a cute and sweet girl she was and commented on her Island Park hat. President Dance even gave her a dollar to use in the trading post before we left. En route home Daddy commented on how nice everyone was to her and she said, "Wow, I didn't know I was THAT special!" I thought it was appropriate that these people who have given so much of their lives and energy to building boys would go out of their way to build SaraKay. We appreciated their sensitivity to her and the situation she was in as the only child at the event and a little out of her element.

Tim's due home soon. Daddy called from camp this afternoon to check on us. There was a tornado in Bingham County today and he heard about it on the radio and wanted to make sure we were okay. I heard later on the news that it touched down in Pocatello and turned over two semi-trucks and blew the windows out of several vehicles at a truck stop. Luckily, we didn't see any sign of it here. He related to me that a boy at Treasure Mountain camp on the Table Rock hike had been struck by lightning and was being life flighted out although it looked as if he had only minor burns.

August 25, 1999

[Mom] It's only Sunday evening but Daddy has returned to Island Park, Tim is on splits with the full-time missionaries, and SaraKay is organizing her school supplies.

We received word that Paul will arrive home on August 25th at 7:31 p.m. at the Idaho Falls airport. He will have an hour layover in Salt Lake from 5:50 to 6:50 that evening. Although I haven't conferred with him about it, I suspect that the next morning we will be going shopping for school clothes and supplies! His mission report has been scheduled for August 29th (John's birthday) at 10:30. It will be pretty intense but I think the 29th will work better for all the college students and so I'm pleased with the change. When I mentioned the change to John, he reminded me that it was just six years ago on his birthday that he and Becky had their mission farewells!

SaraKay and I attended our Northwest Stake's "King Benjamin Encampment" last week. Each ward camped as a unit, families each set up a tent for their family, and there were firesides, games, and other activities planned to emphasize strengthening families. We were told to make a family flag and we had a fun time last week sewing and painting a flag that represented our family. We planned all week long for the event and by Friday afternoon we had the car packed, camping equipment loaded, food prepared and everything ready to go. Earlier in the week we realized that Tim's work schedule wouldn't permit him to attend but SaraKay and I decided to go with or without him.

We invited one of SaraKay's nonmember friends, Drew Hutchison, to go with us. We have been trying to find an excuse to include her in some church activities and this seemed like the perfect opportunity. When SaraKay called to invite her, her mother agreed to it. Before the phone call was over, it was agreed that SaraKay would attend Bible school with Drew the following morning and join in some of the Southern Baptist activities in exchange for her coming with us. When SaraKay got off the phone, her eyes were as big as saucers at the thought of attending the Bible school but as we talked it through, she settled down and decided that she would be able to handle it.

Friday was a beautiful, hot summer day, perfect for our stake activity. When we were loading the car, we couldn't find the small brown dome tent that we were planning to take so we took the larger six-man tent.

The encampment was at a large, grassy park by the Snake River just off the Shelley Exit. Our

ward was assigned an area on the upper part of the park, extending from a shelter on the south end to the fence surrounding the entire park on the north end. When we arrived, the Elder's Quorum was directing traffic and offered to help us pitch our tent since they could see I was on my own. We selected a spot by a large pine tree just a few yards from the chain link fence and next to Pam and Randy Cox's family tent. We pitched our tent, set out our lawn chairs, organized our sleeping bags and suitcases, put up our family flag and made the rounds visiting with other families. Following supper, a program was held honoring the old bishopric and presenting both Bishop Godfrey and Bishop Jenks beautiful quilts constructed with individual quilt blocks from every family in the ward. It was a pleasant evening complete with individual family time. I had prepared some Mormon Bingo and also another fun game. We used pinto beans and cheerios, getting to bed about 10:30. There was still a lot of commotion going on around us but we were soon asleep.

About two in the morning, I awoke to the sound of rain. I already had the side windows secured but the front door zipper wouldn't zip all the way closed at the top and I was worried that the rain would get in through the opening. I quickly moved all the suitcases and bags away from the sides of the tent and put a towel to catch any drips that might come in through the opening on the door. I got back into bed as the wind began to come up. It came up with such a fury that SaraKay and Drew woke up and expressed alarm at the sounds of it. The sides of the tent were whipping in the wind and the roar of the wind was deafening. I told them to lie down and go back to sleep.

I had no sooner tried to allay their fears than an enormous gust of wind filled our tent like an inflated balloon and before we knew what was happening, the tent was air born and rolling like a giant ball with the three of us and all our possessions tumbling inside. The force of the wind was unbelievable and I felt like we were surely going to be blown out of the park and up onto the nearby highway. The next thing we knew, we were brought to an abrupt halt and being pressed against something that had arrested our flight. I quickly realized that we were pressed against the fence with part of the tent caught on the barbed wire barrier on the upper part of the fence. I didn't know if another

gust would roll us up and over or what would become of us.

SaraKay and Drew were yelling and when we came to rest on the fence, we tried to find each other. We couldn't move but we could talk to each other and knew that we were okay except for being badly shaken and scared to death. We had a quick prayer asking the Lord to help us know what to do and to protect us. Almost immediately the wind quit. The minute the roar of the wind quit, SaraKay and Drew started yelling, "Help, help!"

My only thought was of a way to escape the tent so that if another wind came up we wouldn't be trapped and propelled across the highway and into the river. I couldn't find the door and I was suspended in a large hammock with everything including my four-inch foam rubber pad encasing me. Within a few seconds other ward members came to our rescue. They were able to unhook the tent from the barbed wire and find the door. Within a few minutes we had all tumbled out and surveyed the damage. Our tent poles were bent, the tent ripped where it had hung up on the barbed wire, and everything in the tent scrambled like eggs. Because we didn't dare nor could we pitch the tent again, everyone helped us gather up our bags, quilts, clothes, and other things and we slept the rest of the night in the car. I made a bed for SaraKay and Drew in the back seat with the foam rubber and bags and I slept in the front.

Our tent wasn't the only one damaged. Cox's tent had so many poles bent that they won't be able to use it again. Several families had their tents ripped and poles bent. The Dave Hansen family had their 18 foot teepee lifted up into the air and miraculously moved over all the occupants and then collapse onto the grass without a single person being injured by the falling poles. The ward adjacent to ours had a large canopy that was blown nearly 50 yards across several tents to come to rest on the barbed fence. There were power lines downed and emergency vehicles at the site until nearly four trying to get the lines up and the camp out of danger. Harpers tent survived because of Brent's decision to drop the tent when he heard the roar of the wind. One family had their new tent literally torn in two although it never left the ground.

We were the only ones that were air born and it was probably because we were in such a large tent with so little weight. Needless to say, we didn't get much sleep after the storm hit. SaraKay and Drew stayed awake long after the incident and kept waiting for the News 8 reporters to arrive so they could share their story.

The next morning we all felt grateful that no one had been seriously injured despite the flying debris and problems. We later learned that we had been victims of what is a "micro burst" phenomenon. It is similar to a tornado in its intensity. It had been felt throughout Blackfoot and much of the valley towards Idaho Falls. It had blown roofs off, uprooted trees, and done damage up and down the valley with wind speeds of up to 90 m/hr. The experience gave new meaning to the cliché "blown away".

Of course, in the retelling the next day, the story got funnier and funnier. I became the camp Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz and SaraKay, Toto. We all had a good laugh over the sight of our tent balloon rolling head over heels with the three of us trapped inside. It was truly an amazing experience and left a lot to be desired as we tried to retrieve our belongings including two pairs of glasses. It had its funny moments as Steve Reader tried to get the tent door unzipped and asked, "Is everyone decent?" It was also a bit unnerving having people pulling our belongings out of the wreckage and finding pinto beans, cheerios, and worrying that someone might come up with a spare pair of garments or other personals.

When we arrived home Saturday and had a chance to talk to Daddy on the phone, we had news to tell. SaraKay came right home and got a white T-shirt out of her dresser drawer and wrote across the front, "I survived the tornado of '99!" That afternoon a lady came to pick up some things from us and she saw SaraKay's T-shirt and started to laugh. I began to explain about the wind and she said that she hadn't been able to attend the encampment but she had already heard about our adventure from someone else in the community! I guess we're famous! En route home Drew asked an interesting question. "Whenever I go somewhere with my friends, when I get home my mom always asked me if I had a good time. What shall I tell her?"

(Tuesday)Daddy stopped in for lunch and a few hours work on the Tiger Ear sign-up sheets. He looked so tired that after I fed him, I insisted that he lie down for a few minutes and catch his breath. He didn't object.

August 2, 1999

[Mom] Daddy's week at camp last week was his best. He actually got a chance to visit with some of the participants, take a nap, and enjoy the time instead of feeling so stressed. It was a special treat for him to have our ward troop up there for the week and to have them so pleased with all that was done. It seemed to be a wonderful experience for those that attended. I'm sure that part of the reason was that so many of the scout's fathers chose to attend and that they added a stability that is needed when you get that many little scouts together for that long. From the accounts I heard, nearly every father and some grandfathers attended for all or part of the week including Steve Reader, Randy Cox, John Fisher, Dwight Gardner, Bruce Ellis, Frank Wolf, Brent Harper, Dave Hansen, Cordon Wray, Ray Taylor, and the scout leaders Tony Watson and Lenny Pincock. What a show of parental support!

This week there will be about 300 mutual girls in the camp from various wards throughout Utah and Idaho. Of course, all of the staff wanted to help out but since the girls don't work on merit badges nor do some of the other activities, the staff was reduced from 50 to 20 and many weren't invited to stay. Tim is having "summer shutdown" at Basic and so he left yesterday to spend the week at camp as Daddy's "side-kick". Dad's gain is my loss. I'll really miss Tim's help around here but I'm grateful that they are going to have the week together. Tim is going to call me each day to instruct me on answering his e-mail and keeping his business going while he is gone.

My thoughts and prayers have been with Grandpa and Grandma Richards these past weeks since my trip to Arizona. I know that this change cannot help but be traumatic for both them and the Bricker's and that there are many adjustments to be made. Grandma called Wednesday to tell me that the decision had been made to put their name on a waiting list at a rest home in Salt Lake so that Grandpa would have a place to go when it reaches the stage where he can't be cared for by family. I really

struggled with this decision since I have wanted them to come here and try our situation before putting him in a rest home. I have since visited with several of my siblings about it and we are all trying to find answers and do the best thing for them both. Grandpa is increasingly immobile and Grandma is worn down by the constant care she has willingly given these last years. Both have needs that must be considered and it is a complex and emotional issue. I'm trying to gain a confirmation of my own through prayer that this is the right thing to do. Please remember them and the Bricker's in your daily prayers.

I just sat down and read Laurel's e-mail regarding their travels in Connecticut. I have appreciated her frequent letters and efforts to include us in on the experiences they are having. I'm grateful that they are taking advantage of their time to visit these historic sites.

My summer here has been a little less dramatic but filled with experiences that have brought me a lot of satisfaction. It has been quite an experience for Tim and me to handle the challenges of keeping things green and growing around here as well as repaired. I've come to appreciate the lot of the widow a little more and how stale life is without a mate to share it with.

I've learned some new things regarding my yard and garden care. I've identified some plant diseases and how to mix chemicals and apply them to protect our trees from blight. I've learned to set a dam, spray for potato beetles, and I've devised a plan for another year to maximize our raspberry crop. It has been fun to raise a garden again this year and work with the "good earth." Our little windbreak is finally higher than the pasture grass and thriving.

My church job continues to vex me into working harder to find ways to teach more effectively so that the children will be enticed to listen and be touched by the Spirit. Hopefully each of you are having your share of "growing" experiences this summer. Aren't we fortunate to live in a country that affords us the freedom to experience, choose, and make our way amidst the challenges of this day and age?

I enjoy the things each of you share with me regarding your daily activities. For instance, this past week when I called David he related to me that his new home teaching companion is an ex-convict whose wife was previously married to a

man who killed her mother and shot her in the jaw. They have both joined the church and are coming into activity through church associations and assignments. Bonnie shared with me the news that an 18-month-old neighbor boy drowned in a neighbor's small ornamental pool last week and she talked about the challenge of dealing with this loss. Becky and Chet visited some non-member friends yesterday to continue their fellow shipping efforts with them. They were offered some pie cherries and picked a few to make jam with. (When Becky questioned whether it was the right thing to do on the Sabbath, Chet informed her that if you don't "break a sweat" it's okay. Now there's one I haven't heard before!) Jeff and Jonie and family visited a berry farm and picked 75 pounds of blueberries and were busy canning and freezing them. They are so exemplary when it comes to using their resources (wild game for meat, wild rice from the nearby lakes, berries, home-grown vegetables) to provide for their needs.

Mike mentioned that yesterday was his last fast Sunday in his ward since he will be moving in a couple months and he told me about some of the amazing testimonies that were born. I love hearing about these experiences and relish the opportunities that each of you are having as you give service to your families and friends. The highlight of my week was when SaraKay and Tim bore their testimonies yesterday. SaraKay's was quick and to the point, but Tim shared a lot of his feelings with the ward that left a lot of us in tears and grateful for such a special young man. I had a lot of sweet comments on his expressions of testimony and love and one of the most poignant came from Janet Jenks. She said that following Tim's testimony she couldn't help thinking about the influence he has had on her sons by his righteous example. Other ward members sought me out to share similar expressions. It will be Tim's last fast Sunday in the ward for a while since he will be leaving for Ricks and I thought it appropriate that he express appreciation to the ward members for their loving support of him throughout his growing up years. It made me proud!

This morning at seven the doorbell rang and I answered it in bare feet, uncombed hair, no make-up, and looking pretty disheveled. It was Farrell Wray looking for Daddy, wondering if he would teach his lesson this Sunday. I felt pretty sheepish looking like I did but it was obvious

that he wanted to visit with me regarding Tim's testimony and what parenting techniques we had employed to raise such a fine group of kids.

I was pretty uneasy about addressing such a topic, not only because I looked like something out of a horror movie, but because I am aware of the struggles that the Wray's have had with some of their children despite their devotion and best efforts and I certainly don't have any answers as to why some children accept counsel and others don't. I know a lot of our success has come because of the righteous gene pool you kids inherited and I don't really have any other answer for your willingness to accept the gospel and live it. I think Farrell and Claudia's efforts will win for them a crown of glory and that eventually these children who are struggling will accept their parent's values and adhere to gospel principles. I have the utmost respect for all the Wray's and look to them for examples in much of my life and I tried to encourage Farrell and express my admiration for all they do.

July 4, 1999

[Mom] We know that several of you will be arriving at various times the weekend prior to the reunion. We are planning for that and just need for you to keep touch and remind us of exact times and dates so I can have beds ready and food prepared. The reunion will start on Monday at whatever time you can arrive. Lunch meal will be the responsibility of each family since arrival times will vary. That afternoon there will be time for water sports and setting up camp. There are three small cabins similar to what we had at Treasure Mountain and several tents that have wooden sides and wooden floors with two adult-size cots in them. Sometimes it is possible to have electricity in the tents and that will have to be determined as the summer goes on. I believe the cabins have power to them. Each family will need to bring sleeping bags and bedding for their own needs. Don't worry about any other camping equipment since the kitchen is fully equipped. There is one modern bathroom and shower but a large shower house and lots of outdoor bathrooms. There is power in the lodge also.

As many of you are aware, early mornings and evenings can be very chilly, so bring long pants, warm pajamas, jackets, maybe some old gym shoes for the waterfront, swim suits, shorts,

grooming supplies, towels, washcloths, insect repellent, sun screen, chap stick, and anything else you have room for that would help your family survive the outdoors. I'll have lots of supplies, too.

The waterfront is equipped with adult size life jackets as well as children's sizes 8-18. There are no life jackets for toddlers. I know that a great deal of our time will be spent on the water so I want to stress the importance of having the proper safety equipment. There are bikes available and bike trails as well as hiking trails. Becky and Chet purchased some equipment that toddlers use on the bikes and they will bring that and make it available to be used by everyone.

This Tuesday SaraKay and I are leaving for Salt Lake to help Grandpa and Grandma get ready to leave for Arizona. I will help Grandma finish up her cleaning and disposing of food. On Thursday they will fly out at 3:30 and then I will proceed on to Tooele and stay the night with Steve and Bonnie. Friday we will celebrate SaraKay's birthday with Rachel, Nathan, and Chrissy and then Friday night I will return to the condo to help Kathy and Dick load up the U-Haul. Early Saturday morning we will leave for Lisa's in Gilbert. It will be a big day for us. We will spend Sunday and Monday with Lisa and Don and help Grandpa and Grandma get settled in before heading home on Tuesday. We will spend the night on Tuesday with Kathy and Dick and leave Wednesday morning for home. Tim will be working and taking care of things here at home. Daddy will be home on the 10th and 11th and back to camp the following week.

Last night SaraKay and I attended the annual Melaleuca Fourth of July Celebration. Chet had a hotel room with a balcony and view of the river and temple, overlooking the buffet area and the orchestra. It was an absolutely fabulous evening for us! Our only regret was that Dad and Tim couldn't be there with us. The fireworks rivaled what we saw years ago at the Stadium of Fire and having such an excellent seat for the evening made it so enjoyable. We sent Mike off for Provo about 3:30 yesterday and assume that he got back alright. Steve and Bonnie have been in Idaho Falls with her folks the last few days and we are looking forward to some time with them on Friday.

August 10, 1999

[Mom] Shauntel and Camille just left to go visit the Archibald's for a few hours. We have had a great time catching up on the news and chasing Camille around the house since their arrival Friday evening. Thank goodness for SaraKay! Camille loves her and can even say her name now. Shauntel said that last night about midnight Camille woke up, sat up in bed, climbed out, and walked upstairs to the kitchen area.

Shauntel was close behind and wondering what in the world she was doing and then it dawned on her that Camille was looking for SaraKay to play with. I woke up when I heard them in the kitchen and went out to see if I could help. We decided that the only way we would get Camille to settle down again for the night was to show her that SaraKay was in bed asleep so we took her back to the bedroom and showed her that SaraKay was fast asleep and she seemed content to go back to bed. It's been fun to see them playing together and has given us the time to get some of the things done that we needed to for the reunion.

Daddy and Tim left last night for their final week of camp. Tim will work until Thursday and then meet up with the ward priest quorum for their super activity for the last three days of the week. He thoroughly enjoyed his time at camp last week as the assistant COPE director. This is a course that involves repelling, climbing, using a zip line, and other strenuous activities. He is assisting John Akim who is a retired police officer from Salt Lake who lives in Island Park area. John has extensive experience with mountain climbing and once took a 50 foot fall that really messed him up. He has had 20-something surgeries in his lifetime as a result of his injuries. He and Tim have learned to work well together and have a lot of respect for each other. Tim said the week was the highlight of his entire summer. It was especially gratifying to him to be able to conquer his own fears of heights and learn to use and trust the equipment.

Shauntel's plane flight arrived at the Salt Lake airport at 1 a.m. on Friday and Kyle (Randy's younger brother) picked her and Camille up and they slept that night at their new home in Tooele. They moved in last week and are just a block away from Steve and Bonnie. We had

planned on babysitting Camille on Friday for Shauntel while she attended the Moon\Archibald wedding but they were running so late that they didn't have time to stop en route and they just drove straight to the temple and barely made it in time for the ceremony. It made for a long but enjoyable day.

Last night Shauntel, SaraKay, and I had our Sunday night scripture time and then we scheduled the upcoming week. It got to be somewhat of a joke as we penciled in who was coming and at what time and all the arrangements that we needed to make for cribs, bedding, food, etc. It is going to be a trick to keep our wits about us as the weekend approaches and people start arriving. I keep making lists and more lists and trying to remember all the details we've talked about. Hopefully the weather will cooperate and our plans will work. Just being together will make it special. I've wondered if we should have requested an early, early release for Paul so he could join us but since he is already being released nearly three weeks early to get back into school, I just didn't feel right about asking for another favor and I felt like Paul would be disappointed if he didn't complete his time. We are counting the days (16) until his arrival!

August 8, 1999

[Mom] The house is quiet this morning and evidence of the activities of these last few weeks is nearly gone. I've spent the last few days putting away coolers, sleeping bags, baby cribs, and changing the sheets on the beds downstairs in preparation for our upcoming weekend. I've been so busy that I've hardly had time to think about Paul's arrival. I'm sure that it's a blessing since time would stand still if I got excited too soon.

For those who want to see him at the airport in Salt Lake on Thursday, he will arrive at 5:50 p.m. on Delta 1540 and leave at 6:45 on flight 3997. I'm sure he would be delighted to see any of you that could make it. His arrival time in Idaho Falls will be 7:31 pm. He is scheduled on Friday at the eye doctor and dentist and a quick shopping trip in the afternoon. I wish I had another week before he and Tim left for Ricks. It's been hard for me to concentrate on getting ready for the Sunday dinner and on all the packing and preparations for getting things ready for them to leave. I'm sure it will all work

out. It's not quite as final when they leave for Rexburg as it is when they go to Provo.

It feels good to have the reunion over and everyone safely home. It is always a worry when there are so many of you who have to travel long distances to join us. We appreciated everyone's efforts to be here. We felt like it was a success and that we can establish the reunion tradition and continue it for years to come.

[Dad] After a two-month absence, it's hard to get back into the swing of writing again. What a joy last week was! I thoroughly enjoyed having all of you in "my" camp! It was so fun to watch you on the waterfront and to listen to your games of Scum each night. It was rewarding to watch the interactions between various family members as you found times and means to visit with each other and to recognize the differences in each developing family unit and to realize the validity and beneficial influence of those differences. Thank goodness we are not all the same! I value the broadening influence of the diversity and uniqueness of each of you, your spouses, and your children.

It was a special treat to be able to have Dad and Alva Lu join us for an afternoon and evening. It was a treat to be able to take them out on the lake in a row boat. They were also great help in preparing the evening meal and we so appreciated them making the sacrifice to be there. I know they enjoyed meeting their great grandchildren!

We made a quick trip to Utah on Sunday to ordain Steve a High Priest and participate in his setting apart to the High Council in the new stake that was just created a week ago. Their new stake president was their bishop when they moved to Tooele and he called several very young High Councilors to be able to relate to the many young families moving there. I still remember when I was put in a Bishopric at the "Y" and was ordained a High Priest by our Stake President, William R. Siddoway, and how I wished he had allowed me time to have my father involved. So, it was an honor to be there for Steve. They were encouraged to move ahead with their plans to sell their home and move to Logan and thus they are still in that mode even with this new calling.

I can't count how many times a day I think about Paul coming home on Thursday. I am like your mother and I have to just keep busy to keep

from thinking about it too much. What a blessing it is to have him returning honorably and with the success and growth he has experienced. Yesterday, a Hispanic youth came to the door with a letter he was personally delivering. His family had been in San Luis Potosi and brought us a letter from Manuel Trevino. It was such a surprise and also a treat to realize again how deep the ties are with those we share the gospel with.

August 31, 1999

[Dad] Last week was full and rewarding. I was able to get a lot done at work and even made it back up to camp with Elmo to do more closing down things and hauled a bunch of stuff down from camp so that mice wouldn't get into it.

Probably the most exciting thing was getting Paul home Thursday night. We were at the airport in Idaho Falls by 7:15 but Dad and Alva Lu were already there ahead of us. Becky, Chet and Madison arrived shortly after we did. It is always a thrill to see your missionary come walking through the door and know he is home safe and sound. Paul looks much the same. The biggest change is in his speaking. He talks a lot faster and has the typical Hispanic accent to his English.

He hasn't had much opportunity to sit still and get grounded since he arrived. Friday he had eye and dental exams and TB tests and shopping. Thanks to you who have called; I know that has meant a lot to him. We were grateful to have the crowd we had on Sunday. It was a beautiful meeting and we had lots of compliments on it. Right after the sacrament, the choir sang an arrangement of "I Need Thee Every Hour" with all the family that were here joining with the Choir and Tim singing a solo on the first verse. Paul then spoke and didn't have much difficulty filling most of the time with meaningful stories and experiences. He and Merritt Van Orden, Mica Clegg, and Brett Turpin then sang a quartet, "Brightly Beams" and they sounded absolutely wonderful. It is hard to believe that they haven't sung together for over 2 1/2 years. Then Sue and I each spoke. The theme of the meeting was based on Elder Jensen's talk on friendship at the April Conference. It tied in beautifully with the messages we had prepared.

We stayed for our whole meeting block and immediately following we took care of Tim's

ordination as an Elder. He had tremendous support from friends and advisors, bishoprics old and new, and family. We had to form about three circles to get everyone so they could touch someone who was touching Tim. He received a beautiful blessing and was obviously touched by it all as he greeted everyone afterward. Thanks to Sue's preparation and organization we had a wonderful meal afterward and fed about 40 people. We were able to send leftovers home with the college students and felt good about everything. It was after 5:00 before everyone left—including Tim, on his way up to school. He called late requesting things he had forgotten.

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's update on our weekend. We especially appreciated Grandpa and Grandma Larsen, Rick and Terry and family, and Deniece's daughter, Christine, for joining us. Gary and Linda were in Alpine, Utah blessing Garon and Alison's new baby and were unable to attend. My biggest concern, aside from feeding the masses, was getting done the things that Paul needed in order to be able to be ready to leave for Ricks yesterday. Before we went shopping Paul went to TimMart (Tim's well stocked bedroom) and selected clothes and shoes that Tim had that were available for a price (a very reasonable one, mind you!) and by the time he had purchased shoes, pants, and several shirts from Tim, he didn't think we needed to go to the mall but I convinced him that we did. All joking aside, Tim has shopped so carefully these past years that he does have some wonderful clothes at unbelievable prices and Paul was thrilled to get the benefit of Tim's wise purchases.

Saturday evening Steve and Bonnie arrived for the missionary weekend, but John and Laurel and Mike were unable to come until Sunday morning. Becky and Chet also joined us for the day and we always appreciate all they do. I felt apprehensive about the Provo bunch cutting the time so close but there really wasn't any alternative in view of the situation with school and work. What a relief it was to see Mike and crew arrive at the stake center just as we were going into the building.

Paul did a wonderful job on his talk although he had to stop and grope for English words several times. We've had many sweet comments regarding how well he did! He was a good missionary and can be proud of the service he gave. Many of his close friends attended the

dinner afterward. Tim's ordination was also very special with so many family members joining in the circle. Daddy gave him a beautiful blessing and Tim embraced each brother (and brother-in-law) following the ordination. It was a pretty teary time for everyone. By the time the day was over, I felt emotionally spent but tremendously satisfied with the events of the day!

Sunday afternoon Tim finished moving to Ricks with Shane Jenks; Paul and I completed his preparations on Monday. I think Paul was grateful for the additional day in which to catch his breath and organize his things. He seemed pretty tender Sunday night as we talked over the events of the day. Monday morning he finished up some errands and spent a good part of the day in his bedroom, listening to his favorite CD's and packing up. I think being in his room with his favorite music and pictures was therapeutic for him and several times I had to go down and give him a hug and tell him how wonderful it was to have him finally home. I wish each of you could have been here to share in that time.

Ricks started today and I am anxious for a report of the day's happenings. Since it isn't long distance (and since I am doing some secretarial work for Tim on his Oakley business) I am hoping that they will indulge me and call to give me a brief report on how it went. I spent most of my day running errands and continuing to put away the debris from several weeks of activity. It feels good to have our summer drawing to a close.

All in all, I feel so gratitude for the events of the past few weeks. When Daddy and I looked through the proofs of the reunion photo session, we just sat and smiled. What a wonderful family! We constantly marvel at the Lord's blessings to us and of the wonder of each of you and the goodness we see in you. I don't think all the world's gold could equal the joy we feel in our family. You are a precious treasure! We relished our time together and pray the Lord's choicest blessings to be with each of you as you live the gospel and meet each day's challenges. We are pleased with our beautiful grandchildren. We sense your dedication to their nurturing and well-being and bear witness to you that you will never, ever regret the time you give to strengthening your families. They will continue to amaze you and bring you more joy that you even thought possible.

Life is good and we express our appreciation to the Lord for Paul's safe return and for the sweet opportunity we had a few weeks ago to join together as an extended family and share our lives for a few days. Our Tuesday night "insight" session was invaluable. I still think on it with tender feelings and find joy in knowing that each of you recognize that the Lord is mindful of you and working in your lives.

September 5, 1999

[Mom] We've had a relatively peaceful Sabbath despite Daddy's shift at the Tiger Ear booth earlier today. Our weekend was not as quiet with all the preparations for the fair and Tim's sun glasses booth. He had an idea some weeks ago that if he set up a booth at the fair, he might be able to sell a lot of his sun glasses without the hassle of e-mail and postage. He went tracting and found a sweet elderly couple who have a front yard on a street less than a block from the front entrance of the fair and they agreed to let him set up a booth on Saturday. Tim caught a ride home from Ricks on Friday night with a roommate and Saturday morning he and Dad were up early getting things ready for the onslaught of the fair crowds. Daddy was retrieving honey butter that was being stored at Kesler's Market and making last minute preparations for the tiger ears and Tim was setting up his table and sound system, lining up friends to help with the selling, and displaying his wares.

All the coming and going nearly made SaraKay and I late for the parade but we took care of all the chasing and arrived at the parade route with about 10 minutes to spare, lawn chairs in hand. Imagine our surprise to find not only Grandpa and Grandma Larsen sitting waiting for the parade but also Karen and her three children with them. They were visiting for the holiday weekend and we just happened upon them and enjoyed watching the parade with them all. Usually we go alone since Daddy is involved at the fair and the other kids are usually on a parade float and with their friends.

Daddy took a break about six from the booth and came home for supper before going back to load more supplies that would be needed for today. We offered to take Tim and Shane back to Rexburg so they could attend their college ward today and they thought they could be ready by about eight. When Daddy stopped at

the scout office en route to the fair to get napkins and oil, the council pickup he was using to haul supplies wouldn't start. He called home and I took some jumper cables in but it still wouldn't work so we loaded the supplies into our pickup and drove to the fair to drop them off. When Daddy got to the booth he learned that only half of the crew for the 7-11 shift had shown up and so Sara Kay and I offered to work in the booth while Dad drove Tim back to Rexburg. It was nearly midnight before we got home and we were all tired. Hopefully the volunteers will show up for their assignments this week so we don't have to substitute too much.

One of my highlights last week was being able to go with Daddy and Paul for his report to the high council. It is always a special time to share in the experience with our returning missionary of being given a "well done" from the stake presidency and high council. They were very complimentary of Paul and his report.

The house has seemed pretty quiet this past week (except for Saturday) and I have begun work on a long over-due project—redecorating the blue downstairs bedroom. SaraKay helped me strip the wallpaper and wash down the walls. This week I hope to fill some holes with putty, sand off some rough edges, and get things ready to paint. My goal is to have it finished up by Thanksgiving and continue on down the hall, painting, repairing, and replacing the carpet.

[Dad] We are in the middle of the Fair and Tiger Ear demands but still find time to write! I have all the rest of my shifts full except for three and so the phoning isn't quite so wild. We are doing well so far—in fact we are about \$3500 ahead of last year at the same time. It was fun to visit with Karen last night and then again for a few minutes today at the fair. The Tiger Ears were a real hit and Alva Lu and Dad thought they even tasted better than ever. The modifications in the recipe because of using Cake and Pastry flour instead of multi-purpose flour have proven quite effective.

Last week's visit with the High Council with Paul was a real treat. We love the Stake presidency and High Council so much and it was a joy to be there with Paul to report his mission. Paul was a great yet humble missionary and it shows when

he talks about the people and his experiences in El Salvador.

I was pleased that Tim wanted to get back up to school and to go to his new ward. He had a very successful day selling sunglasses at the fair and he and Shane were ready to get back to their apartment. Apparently, they had a great Sunday with invitations from two apartments of girls for dinner and enjoyed their new bishopric.

September 14, 1999

[Dad] Well, it is over-the Eastern Idaho State Fair and the Tiger Ear Booth that is. This has been the most successful week ever—we sold 6,000 more Tiger Ears than we ever have before. Toward the end it was hard to keep up with the supplies necessary to keep things going. I had to buy some more yeast and oil and get another pallet of flour donated and haul stuff in on a hand truck through the crowds late Saturday afternoon. One time I had four containers of oil and four bags of flour on the hand truck and it was too much for me to keep balanced and I dumped it right in front of Gary and his family. They helped me reload and break trail through the crowds the rest of the way. We have a little cleanup and disposing of leftovers and returns to Sysco to take care of. It is a relief to have it over. I have made note of changes in recruiting and shift responsibilities for another year and we discussed most of them in staff meeting yesterday. We also will need to replace the one small cooker we are still using—it is having a problem and I think one of the coils has burned out. We put a lot of pressure on the equipment for eight days out of the year and it takes its toll.

I am looking forward to endowment events and visits that are coming up and trying to put together the necessary activity to meet the rest of my critical achievements. We are getting ready for a National Teleconference, an Area II meeting, Endowment Committee meetings, and so on. As a council we are getting ready for the University of Scouting, Popcorn Sale, a Millennial Jamboral next spring, the National Jamboree the following year, and a myriad of other activities and events.

[Mom] I echo Daddy's comments about how good it feels to have the fair over for another year. I'm not sure why but this year was a real ordeal for me. I think it was because we were so far behind on everything here at home including

yard and weed patch (I mean garden) and it was hard to feel like there wasn't any time to catch up from the busy summer. This week we hope to get the lawn mowed and watered before leaving for Arizona on Friday and also to put in some more time in the basement on our remodeling project. We have worked sporadically on it and have all the contents of the blue and green bedrooms piled in the family room and of course, that makes for a real mess in which to navigate each time we go downstairs. We are committed, though, and it seems wonderful to contemplate the finished project and know that things will be clean and new for the first time in a long time.

Daddy found time last week to help with putting and also ripped out the blue carpet. The green room had extensive water damage from years past and I have been trying to get rid of the mildew that covered much of the outside wall. We've learned some dear lessons over the years about how to keep this basement dry. Too bad we didn't have someone to tell us years ago what we were doing wrong.

My week last week was full of interesting experiences. Tuesday I accompanied SaraKay and Carena to the fair. Sister Jenks joined us after a couple of hours and we wandered around the grounds and visited while the kids rode the rides.

On Thursday I helped with Relief Society Homemaking meeting and on Friday I attended a wedding for one of my Laurels. That afternoon the Pincock family came here to use my kitchen to cut up fruit for the evening reception and at six SaraKay and I helped at the garden reception for a couple of hours. The biggest challenge we faced was fighting off the hornets that seemed to infest the yard where the reception was being held. The bees were especially fond of the fresh fruit and the delicious fruit drink that was served and we couldn't keep them away from the serving table which was outdoors. At one time we even had two that were in the kitchen where we were mixing up the drink and preparing the trays and we were trying to work around them until we found a swatter that we used to kill them. The serving table became such a magnet that I hardly dared get near it but the spilled punch and open containers were the source of the attraction and I figured if we could cover things with saran wrap we might win the battle. I took

out water and cloths to clean up spills and cleared the area of any partially filled trays and cups. We covered the open fruit bowls and punch bowls (and fished out several drowned bees) and felt like it would help the situation.

Later when the crowd increased we began uncovering things and I was removing some wrap and visiting with a guest and inadvertently disturbed a drinking hornet and I got stung on my hand. Aside from the initial pain and some swelling, it didn't give me much grief but just added to my frustration with the situation. Several guests commented that they have never seen so many bees before and one even told of when he had eaten a raspberry from a bush and unknowingly eaten a hornet along with it. He said the bee stung him on the inside of his mouth and then flew away when he yelped out in pain. That story made me feel a little better about my mild encounter. I was grateful when the reception drew to a close.

Yesterday Madison was visiting and Becky and I were outside watching her on the trampoline and a hornet tried to get to her. (She had been eating ice cream and had some of it spilled on her dress. We tried and tried to keep it away and it landed on her twice but didn't sting her. Finally, Becky ran with her into the garage while I swatted at the bee and eventually we both retreated to the house.

Sunday evening Rick and Terry hosted the Larsen home evening for September and we were treated to a delicious dinner of spare ribs and other scrumptious food. Terry is such a master in the kitchen and so willing to share her talents. It was nice to have Becky and Madison along, too. Chet was with his family in Salt Lake for his younger brother's ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood prior to flying out to a business meeting in Hawaii. It was our pleasure to include Becky in our plans and have her spend the night Sunday with us. She is always fun to have around!

This weekend Daddy, SaraKay and I are leaving for Arizona to help Grandpa and Grandma Richards move back to Salt Lake. As a part of our trip, we are going to spend a couple days with David and Andrea and family, stop for an overnigher with John and Laurel, visit Kathy and Dick, spent a few minutes with Mike, and drop Daddy off to an endowment seminar in Ogden. As usual, our casual trip has turned into

a marathon but nevertheless, we are pleased to get to see so much family and also help my folks to relocate in Salt Lake. We will put the folks on a flight on Thursday afternoon at four and leave for home at six a.m. on Friday.

As Daddy can testify, much of my thoughts and prayers these past weeks have been focused on my aging parents. I know Grandma Richards is worn out from being Grandpa's primary care giver and needs some relief. I know that Grandpa Richards' condition has worsened and that he now needs more care than mother can give him. My siblings and I have done a lot of investigating of options of what course to take to ensure Mother's well-being and also maintain Daddy's dignity and happiness. I have made numerous phone calls to Kathy and Lisa to discuss ideas and I still feel unsettled about the whole situation. I know that there are answers but maybe not easy ones. I know Grandma needs relief but I worry about Grandpa being put in a facility. I've laid awake at night going over the situation and made calls to rest homes, assisted living centers, and other agencies who deal with aging issues, but I'm still not satisfied with our options. For now, we need to move ahead and bring Grandpa and Grandma back to Salt Lake and get Grandma into her own home. I've appreciated that I could talk candidly with my siblings regarding my feelings and that we are working together to come to the right solution.

September 27, 1999

[Mom] We left here on Friday, the 17th, and drove to Provo. We had arranged to visit Mike first and then to spend the night with John and Laurel. Mike's apartment is a newly remodeled duplex which he shares with the owner's two sons. It is a considerable distance from campus, the rent is reasonable, and the apartment very nice. He enjoys his roommates but the drive to campus each day has been a drawback. The first Sunday of the new school year he was here for Paul's homecoming and the second Sunday the ward was divided and so yesterday was the first time the ward actually met as a unit and he was able to start getting acquainted. He received a call to serve as gospel doctrine teacher and he is pleased with that new assignment. His classes are extremely challenging and he is under a lot of stress so in some ways the quiet, remote apartment has been a blessing to him. He wishes he would find

the "girl of his dreams" but it hasn't happened yet so he is making good use of his time.

Following our time with Mike, we continued on to John's place. SaraKay was concerned that Emma would already be in bed, which she was, but not asleep, so Laurel indulged us and brought her out to play. It was fun to watch her play with SaraKay as we sat in the living room visiting. She is so small that it doesn't seem like she should be walking yet but she is very active and entertained us with all the new things she is learning to do. John had received word that day that he had been selected as the GE "Intern of the Year" and will be flown to New York in late October for the awards banquet. We asked if the trip included Laurel's expenses but he said that it didn't since most of the interns aren't married. He commented that he was considered the old man since he had a wife and child already and was two years older than most of them. The honor comes with a cash award of \$500. It's a nice tribute for his summer's work and the money will certainly be helpful. Laurel has been babysitting two children four hours a day and helping with family finances in that way. I know how challenging babysitting can be and certainly admire her for all she does to support John.

Saturday morning we left Provo about seven for Tucson. I made the same trip in July when we moved Grandpa and Grandma to Gilbert but it was a first for Daddy and he thoroughly enjoyed seeing some new country. The area between Gilbert and Tucson was especially interesting since there was a lot of irrigated and terraced farming. We later discovered that most of the land that was under cultivation was in cotton! David and Andrea live in a newly developed area on the far side of Tucson and we arrived about six that evening. Their home is beautiful. It is similar to Steph and Linds' with the open stairway and the bedrooms upstairs. It is in a large subdivision that features several different styles and the landscaping is done with a combination of grass, small trees indigenous to Arizona, decorative rock ground cover, and cactus. I had seen similar landscaping while visiting Lisa in July and Dave and Andrea's home is done much the same. The homes in the subdivision are very close to each other but the architecture enables each family to have privacy while in the house and the yards are enclosed with high cinder block fences that give privacy outside.

It was fun to get to be a part of David and Andrea's life for a few days. We attended stake conference with them on Sunday, played with the kids, went for a walk and collected some specimens for SaraKay's next "show and tell" at school, and enjoyed a Sunday evening recital and singing time with their family. Little Joseph was walking, albeit shakily, and wanted to be a part of everything that was going on. SaraKay thoroughly enjoyed Laurel and Angela and we had lots of time to visit. Following conference Dave and Andrea had an interview with the bishop and Dave was called to be the new Young Men's president. He was surprised at the calling and said that he would have to start thinking a little younger!

Monday Andrea and I and kids drove to Gilbert, leaving Daddy to make the two-hour trip with David when he got home from work. We wanted to give the kids time to swim and also get in some good visiting time with Grandpa and Grandma. David was able to get off work early and he and Daddy weren't far behind us in arriving. Daddy got in the pool with the three girls, I started supper and Dave and Andrea had some good time visiting before they left for home that evening. It was hard to see them go, but rewarding to have the opportunity to see their situation and know that they are doing well.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were spent doing a multitude of projects to prepare Grandpa and Grandma for their departure. We packed boxes, medications, wheel chairs, and shopped for sundry items that they needed before leaving. Grandma had organized to allow for the flight and what she would take to ensure that they had what they needed for Friday until we arrived with the pickup load late Friday night. I tried to stay close to Grandma, giving assistance and Daddy loaded and ran errands as we filled boxes and made the decisions about what goes, what stays, and what was needed in the interim. Daddy and SaraKay enjoyed the pool and Skyler and I joined them in the evenings. It was satisfying to be able to help Grandpa and Grandma get this move behind them. Wednesday evening we all went for a brief tour around the Mesa Temple grounds. We left about 1:30 Thursday to go to the airport and had ample time to get to the boarding gate before their 3:47 flight to Salt Lake.

By the time we had been there for four days with Grandpa and Grandma I could see for myself many of the issues Grandma has been dealing with and how difficult it is becoming for her to handle Grandpa's needs by herself. He is becoming increasingly more affected by the Parkinson's and unable to walk. Aunt Kathy had arranged for him to be moved into a rest home upon his arrival in Salt Lake but a complication developed and so for this next week he is with Grandma at the condo receiving home health care each morning. Uncle Charles had flown in on Friday and when we arrived Friday night Dick and Kathy and Charles helped us unload. We visited for a while before going to spend the night at Kathy's. Charles was helping out until Sunday when he flew home. I have talked to Grandma several times in the last few days and she says they are settling in and doing fine. Grandpa will go in the rest home on Saturday of this week. His condition will be evaluated and a program to meet his needs will be outlined. The home is on 45th South and 9th East so it won't be far for Grandma to travel to see him each day. I know that this is going to be a difficult step for them both since it is the first time they have lived apart in 56 years and we hope that each of you will include them in your prayers.

Grandpa Larsen is recovering from his fall and the stitches were removed that secured the skin to the top of his nose. AlvaLu says that he will have a slight scar but that the injury on his nose hasn't hurt as much as the bump that he received on his forehead. We are so grateful that he is up and going and able to get around. Daddy took over a couple walking sticks before we left for Arizona and suggested that Allan might try one out but we didn't get a commitment from him.

Paul and Tim are enjoying school and each other. Paul is the ward executive secretary (what is it about our family and executive secretary?) and Tim is on the activities committee. Both are studying hard and relishing the opportunity to be able to have the "Ricks experience." Two weeks ago, President Hinckley spoke at one of their devotionals and they have had lots of other special times. Tim has been somewhat awed by the quality of the young women on campus and is doing all he can to get acquainted. Paul is trying to adjust to civilian life again and keep pace with his engineering schedule which includes chemistry, calculus, and physics!

Becky and Chet are doing a juggling act between Chet's heavy demands at work, his MBA classes two nights a week, and Becky's involvement in mutual, piano lessons, chasing Madison, and dealing with morning sickness. They have also been trying to organize their unfinished basement to include a storage room with their year's supply. Luckily, Becky has not been nearly as sick this pregnancy as she was the last and she is trying to do what she can to give Chet the time he needs to fulfill his assignments. His professors have not been inclined to show much empathy for him and his work schedule and it has been a challenge to meet their demands.

Steph called yesterday to say that Linds was put in the bishopric. He had been in Pittsburg on business, flown in on Saturday, interviewed early Sunday morning, sustained and set-apart, and caught a plane to Houston at ten that morning. She is still primary president and the bishop indicated he hoped she would be able to continue despite Linds' new responsibilities.

Shauntel called for some information on ordering the photos and mentioned that they were hosting a fireside for the youth Sunday evening. Randy's assignments in the bishopric have kept them both involved in the youth programs despite Shauntel's release as Young Women president. Randy's work schedule has been much more "family-friendly" since beginning his second year of his residency.

Steve and Bonnie are entering a new stage of life with Rachel's enrollment in kindergarten and Nate's pre-school involvement. I'm sure that it has been a good break for all of them. I still remember sending Stephani off to school and how nice it was for her to get a break from the home scene. I sometimes wonder how Steve and Bonnie are weathering their church involvement, especially on Sundays with Steve's responsibilities to visit other wards and Bonnie's job as Primary president.

SaraKay is out of school this next week for harvest. We enjoyed having her along on our trip to Arizona. Today she is at the church riding her bike with a friend and enjoying the last of summer. It's hard to believe that the community is involved in harvest since this year, for the first time in over 25 years, we don't have a single person in the family working in the spuds! Of course, we are going to make our traditional trip out to the farm to get our year's supply of

potatoes, but it just isn't the same. Whenever I get too nostalgic about it, I just remind myself how good it is to not have the dirt, the long hours, the fear of accidents, and the worry of missing school when harvest break is over but the crop isn't out yet. Our prayers are with Uncle Gary and crew as they work to get his harvest completed.

[Dad] I thoroughly enjoyed Arizona. With just being there a week, I couldn't believe the difference in temperature here in Idaho and my lack of conditioning to handle the cold. I probably had more "kick-back" time this trip than I ever remember having. It was fun and relaxing to spend time in the pool and to go for long walks in the morning. But, it's good to be back to work and to feel productive again. That work ethic can sure be deeply ingrained and not leave you alone to enjoy relaxing for very long.

October 4, 1999

[Mom] We have had a wonderful weekend with Paul and Tim both home. We all listened to conference on Saturday as we worked on painting the bedrooms downstairs. They went with Dad to the Priesthood session last night. Today we watched both sessions on TV and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to relax and be uplifted by the beautiful messages. Becky and Chet came for the morning session and we had dinner together before they headed home. Paul and Tim left about six for Rexburg.

Friday morning Uncle Nate dropped in en route to Utah to see Grandpa and Grandma. He told me that he was coming so I was grateful to have a good visit with him before he continued on to Salt Lake. He has had a tremendous load to carry with the completion of the temple in Billings and the plans for the upcoming open house. With Chad and Maureen and him all so heavily involved, it is sometimes difficult to keep the spiritual perspective.

I was pleased that he got away for a few days and go see Mom and Dad in Salt Lake. He was with them yesterday while they moved Grandpa into the rest home and helped him make that transition. He dropped by this morning on his way back through and spent an hour with us filling us in on yesterday's events. It was a teary conversation. It is hard for him to be so far away from the folks and feel like he can't offer much support.

[Dad] It was indeed a thrill for us to have Tim and Paul here. It's hard to believe that we get "homesick" for family that is away!

It is rewarding to get some painting done downstairs. I can't believe the difference a little putty, paint, and a lot of elbow grease can make in the appearance of a room. We appreciated the help from Paul, Tim, and SaraKay. I couldn't help thinking about Tom Sawyer facing the big fence that needed whitewashing and convincing his friends to join him. SaraKay was so anxious to help that I think she would have paid for the opportunity!

We were deeply touched with the messages and music of conference. It was fun to go to the Priesthood session with Paul and Tim. I thought about each of you sons and sons-in-law and wish we could all attend together and then enjoy the ice cream tradition together. It was interesting that as far as I could see, we were about the only ones taking notes. It is always a treat to be able to share with Sue an accounting of who talked, what they talked about, and what the music was like.

We are truly blessed to live in this day and age, to see the Kingdom of God spreading throughout the world, and to so easily retrieve the words of our inspired leaders-whether through radio, TV, or the internet.

I wanted to share with you a quote that I ran across from Harold B. Lee: "Most men do not set priorities to guide them in allocating their time and most men forget that the first priority should be to maintain their own spiritual and physical strength; then comes their family; then the Church, and then their professions, and all need time." If we choose to put the Savior first in our lives--everything else will fit into its place.

October 24, 1999

[Mom] We've had a wonderful Sunday! Today was our Primary program and it was very satisfying to be a part of it! We had included several special numbers that added a nice touch. We had a flute obligato on the third verse of "Beautiful Savior", a violin duet on the second verse of "Come Follow Me" and featured a soloist on the last verse of "The Holy Ghost" and "When He Comes Again." We also featured the two oldest classes of girls singing "He Sent His Son".

Each child was prepared with their part and they sang the songs as well as they have ever done. I've really learned to love the children and I feel so privileged to work with them. I love the music that we have learned this year and feel that it teaches the gospel with great clarity. We used BEEBE SOUNDS accompaniments for most of the songs and that added a lot to the music as well.

Our Monday\Tuesday trip to Boise threw me off of my normal routine and all week I was trying to catch up. When I arrived home Monday from piano lessons there was a phone message from the new temple president, Mark Ricks, asking us if we could get a message to Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They were in Arizona putting their condo up for sale and we weren't sure if we could reach them but we called Alva Lu's daughter who lives in southern Utah and left word with her that when they stopped en route home, to have them call us immediately. We also needed to make them aware that Beverly Harrington had passed away. Grandpa and Howard have been close friends for many years and we knew he needed to be here for the funeral if at all possible.

Anyway, we did get word to Grandpa and Grandma and they got home Wednesday night and were able to take care of business. President Ricks was calling Grandpa to set up an appointment for him and Alva Lu to meet with Boyd K. Packer on Friday afternoon in Twin Falls so that Grandpa could receive the sealing power. Apparently only a member of the First Presidency or the Quorum of Twelve Apostles can confer the sealing power and so since Elder Packer was going to be in the area, he had requested that the new members of both the Boise and Idaho Falls Temples meet him there. Families were invited to attend. I had been so weary and worried about leaving SaraKay again that I hesitated taking the time for the event, but Rick and Terry offered to take Gary and Linda and us in their van and go as a group and I hated to miss out. It was a pleasant experience and gave us some good family visiting time.

When we arrived in Twin Falls, we were so surprised to find that Staff had flown in for the occasion and even Jeanie and Scott were there after driving all night from Show Low. What an effort on their part! Two of Alva Lu's children were there; Trina and Carlos as well as Jalene and Kendall and two of their older children.

President Packer was in Twin Falls for a stake president's training and he had allotted a half hour for the temple presidency business. He entered the room, shook hands with everyone present, visited for a few minutes with those receiving blessings, and then proceeded with the business at hand. Although Alva Lu could have been set apart by one of the temple presidency, since Elder Packer had time, he personally set her apart as an assistant temple matron. All the blessings were brief but beautiful. I wished later that I had been taking notes. There were several things that stood out in Grandpa's blessing that I would like to mention. He was blessed that his body would be renewed and his memory refreshed so that he could perform his duties in the temple. He was told that his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren would be blessed because of his work in the temple and that they would come to appreciate the significance and meaning of the work that goes on there. He promised Grandpa that because of his righteousness and service in the kingdom, blessings would be "accrued" for the good of his children and grandchildren.

Saturday SaraKay had her first Jazz game. I needed to be at the stake center for our last Primary rehearsal and so Daddy took her to the game. I was anxious to hear how it went and upon returning from the practice I cornered Daddy for a report. He said that he didn't think there was a single person on either team that had a clue as to how the game was played! He said that most of the kids hadn't even figured out that when you get the ball, the object is to go down the court towards your own basket and make a shot. I'm sure it wasn't quite that bad but I suspect that the games this year aren't going to be quite as intense as they were last year when Tim's team took regionals! Thanks to Tim and his coaching, SaraKay has had some experience in playing defense and dribbling and she got a couple steals. That seemed to make her happy.

Our painting saga continues. I've learned something these last few weeks: If you really want to know just how big your home is, paint it. Even those small bedrooms downstairs have taken a lot of effort to get ready to paint. Daddy got the ceilings done Saturday so this week I am hoping to get the walls and closets done and maybe even some trim. I keep having nightmares of all my Thanksgiving company

arriving and of still being in a big mess in the family room. Hopefully this week we can make major strides in that project.

I tried to call John and Laurel tonight to get an update on his trip to New York but they weren't home. I have been in daily touch with my mother regarding the situation with the rest home. Mother has had quite an adjustment to being alone and Dad had a bout with the flu last week so he wasn't quite as chipper as he normally is. Steve and Bonnie and family have gone to visit Dad twice and I know it has meant a lot to him. I appreciate their loving concern for him. I have scheduled to leave a week from today to go to Salt Lake and spend a couple days with Mom and have a chance to visit Dad and get a feel for how he is doing. It's hard to be so far away.

[Dad] Yes, the Primary program was an unqualified success! I really believe Sue has worked wonders with them.

Sue mentioned the trip to Twin for Dad's appointment with Elder Packer. What a thrill to be a part of that experience! It seems that already my thoughts are turning more to the temple and I have gone each week for the past two weeks. A couple of things I noticed about the proceedings—everything was done in a very professional manner and yet maintained a personal touch; Elder Packer set apart or conferred the sealing power and then gave a personal blessing to each and yet the prayers were short and to the point, no more than about a minute and a half; great deference was given to Elder Packer but he seemed totally unaffected and genuine.

Afterward, we went to Chili's for dinner and had a delightful time. I appreciated Dad and Alva Lu taking the time with us even though they were anxious to get to the Tingey reunion in Park City. It was very rewarding to be able to have the time with Staff and Jeanie and Scott. Since I missed the reunion in July because of my camp responsibilities, I was especially grateful for the time to visit and feel of each other's spirit.

November 3, 1999

[Dad] The past couple of days have been lonely ones with Sue gone. She left Sunday morning and is due back home today around noon. SaraKay and I have had some good times together and been busy, but it seems rather

empty here at home without the heart of our home.

Yesterday I spent most of the day helping to do inventory at the Pocatello store. Last night SaraKay and I went to Gary and Linda's for home evening. Rick & Terry were there with their kids (except Aubrey—who was sick), Dad and Alva Lu came although they were anticipating beginning their Temple assignment this morning.

Last Saturday Tim and Paul and I went to Provo and met Mike at John and Laurel's. It was a real treat to feel the electricity in the air as 65,000 people filed into the stadium with anticipation of a great game on a beautiful fall day. It was warm enough we didn't even need jackets. The marching band was wonderful, the cheerleaders and drill team were fun to watch, and there was a demonstration of falconry.

I wanted to share a note with from Paul Harvey: "We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse. For my grandchildren, I'd like better. I'd really like for them to know about hand-me down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meatloaf sandwiches. I really would. My cherished grandson, I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated. I hope you learn to make your bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen. I hope you have a job by then.

"It will be good if at least one time you can see a baby calf born and your old dog put to sleep. I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in. I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you because he's scared, I hope you let him.

When you want to see a Disney movie and your little brother wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him. I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely. On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope your driver doesn't have to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your mom. If you want a slingshot, I hope your dad teaches you how to make one instead of

buying one. I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books.

When you learn to use those newfangled computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head. I hope you get razzed by your friends when you have your first crush on a girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what Ivory soap tastes like.

May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole. I hope you get sick when someone blows cigar smoke in your face. I hope you won't try alcohol (I modified Paul's statement here), and if a friend offers you dope or a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend. I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your grandpa and go fishing with your uncle.

May you feel sorrow at a funeral and the joy of holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through a neighbor's window and that she hugs you and kisses you at Christmas time when you give her a plaster of Paris mold of your hand. These things I wish for you—tough times and disappointment, hard work, and happiness."

[Mom] As Daddy mentioned, I have been in Salt Lake the last few days visiting my folks. Kathy and Dick left Sunday for a week-long business trip so I decided to make a quick trip. I have been concerned about Grandpa and his adjustment to the care center as well as worrying about Grandma and her adjustment to being alone. I arranged for someone to cover for me on Sunday and I left about 9, arriving about noon. We had a pleasant lunch and went to the rest home that afternoon to visit with Grandpa. He looked wonderful and was upbeat and talkative. He has lost a few pounds this past month and he said that he has felt better since going on the new medication that was prescribed for him in Arizona. His left ear that was cancerous and operated on is completely healed. What a relief after all these years to have that problem solved. Grandma and I visited for a couple hours and then headed home. We were expecting John and Laurel to drop in and when we arrived at the condo, they were there waiting.

They brought some delicious homemade pie that Laurel's aunt sent with them after the family dinner that afternoon. Following a brief

visit, John and Laurel followed me to the rest home and I wheeled Emma around the rest home in her stroller while they visited with Grandpa for a while. It was fun for me to see the response of the residents when they saw Emma. Many of them who had seemed unresponsive as I strolled by, brightened up and spoke to her, touching her hands and face and head. One elderly gentleman gave her some candy and several people asked about her.

Following their visit, I was able to have some one-on-one with Grandpa and visit with him about his experiences in the care center this past month. It was a good experience for me to be there and see the routine and challenges he is dealing with. He is being very patient with the situation and trying to be optimistic about it all, but many of the residents are extremely ill or unable to communicate and it leaves him much to himself. I know Grandpa misses this interaction and the bright spot of his day is when Grandma makes her daily visit, bringing his clean laundry and cheerful demeanor.

On Monday I was able to spend most of the late morning and afternoon at the care center and in the afternoon we took a walk to enjoy the beautiful autumn weather. Although it was a little cool, we bundled up to explore the neighborhood. For a while Dad walked pushing his wheelchair and when he tired, I pushed and he rode. As we approached a corner by ninth east, he asked me to wait a minute at the corner before continuing on. Opposite us was a man on a Harley Davison ready to turn onto the street where we stood and Daddy wanted to have a look at it as it passed. The owner of the bike noticed our admiring glances and drove alongside our curb, revving the motor and grinning from ear to ear, as he gave Dad a salute. It was a magical moment and brought a rush of nostalgia. We continued on down the street, reveling in the colors of the season and enjoying the rustle of fallen leaves beneath our feet.

After a while we headed back, fearful of getting ourselves too far from home base. We were grateful for the warmth of the rest home as we arrived safe and sound from our excursion. The rest of the afternoon we visited about a variety of topics and I read from a journal that Grandma Richards kept during their stay in Pakistan which acted as a great memory jogger for Grandpa. Our goodbye was teary, but I felt like I

had shared some sweet moments and accomplished my purpose in being there.

That evening Grandma and I visited and read from some of her personal books some humorous "readings" that she used to give when she was asked to participate on programs. The readings were all about motherhood, raising kids, and family life. We sat and read and laughed and laughed.

I appreciated the opportunity to share the evening hours with Grandma, talking over family concerns, sharing our lives, and renewing our love. I appreciated Daddy and SaraKay managing things here at home so I could leave and not worry about things here, too.

I want to update all of you on what is happening with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. Last week Grandpa Larsen called and ask what Daddy and I would think about them moving to Idaho Falls. He said that the more they had thought about the rigors of the next three years in the temple presidency, the more they felt like they needed to simplify their lives so as to conserve time and energy. They had made the decision to sell the home place and buy a home in Idaho Falls so that they didn't have the lengthy trip on either end of their daily temple shift. Although I had to admit that we'd miss having them close and that the community would be sorry to see them go, that Daddy and I both supported them in their choice. Within three days they called to say that they had made an offer on a townhouse and they were going to be moving the 15th and 16th of November. Their responsibilities in the temple began today so they are going to have an immense amount of work and details to take care of with the move as well as learning all their duties. They have a lot of family living around the area and we can lend the manpower to help with the monumental task ahead. What a big step for them! Our prayers are with them. When Paul arrived home Friday night he had just been to the temple and he mentioned that in the prayer circle that evening, that they prayed for the new presidency.

November 9, 1999

[Mom] It's cold and grey outside today. The wind is blowing and there is the feel of winter in the air. We've had a beautiful autumn complete with sunny, crisp days and time enough to gather in the harvest and prepare for the storms

ahead. It has felt good to be inside and secure against the cold.

I've had a wide range of emotions this past week as I've tried to feel at peace regarding the situation with my Dad. I thought that visiting him would help me come to grips with it, but I'm not sure it did. Alva Lu had warned me that it would be difficult to see him in a rest home. She cared for her terminally ill husband for a lot of years and finally had to put him in a home and she said that it was one of the most difficult things she ever did.

I was grateful for good visits with both my parents during my stay. Grandma and I talked through every possible alternative to a rest home and still came up with the same decision when all the facts were taken into account. And yet the nagging feeling of sadness about my Dad continued to haunt me. I realized part way through last week that I had to let go and go on with my life. As Grandma counseled me, "We must move ahead, waiting on the Lord, and exercising faith in His wisdom and will". That is what I am trying to do. It's hard when we feel that our thoughts and prayers need to be earnest and heartfelt and yet, for our own emotional survival we have to pull away a little.

Years ago, when Grandpa and Grandma were in Pakistan, we were going through some pretty stressful times. As some of you will remember, we sold our farm and home and we were going through the process of building our new one. Two days after we moved from the desert, Tim was born. Grandma Richards was in Pakistan and unable to come assist with my recovery. Those were difficult days. Daddy had a new job and all the stress associated with that as well as the details of buying property and getting our house underway. Uncle Nate contracted to build our cabinets and we were trying hard to get things pulled together so as to be able to move as soon as possible. That winter was one of the severest we had had in a long time and complicated our lives even further.

As the house neared completion, Nate worked feverishly to complete the cabinets and deliver them to us from Richland. He was struggling with his health, but despite his problems, he loaded the cabinets and headed out, arriving one night in the middle of a terrible blizzard. One time during his trip he had nearly lost the cabinets off the back of his truck but had

stopped in time to avoid a costly disaster. The cabinets were not completed but he brought everything he needed to work on them and we set up a heater in the garage so he could use that as his workshop. One afternoon I came over to the house and found him lying on the kitchen floor, deathly ill. I took him to the doctor and he was told he had pneumonia and needed hospitalization. I told Dr. Haddock that knowing Nate as I did, I knew that he wouldn't even consider it and Dr. Haddock said that Nate needed complete bed rest or he could die. We decided that he would pack up and go back to Richland. We arranged with the contractor to complete the installation of the cabinets. Allan came over and loaded Nate's truck for him and we bid he and Chad goodbye.

During that difficult year, I wrote my folks regularly and they wrote back, offering encouragement and support. Grandma later told me that when she and Grandpa would get our letters and learn of our problems, that they would do the only thing they could for us: pray that the Lord would strengthen us and help us weather the storm. I'm sure that their prayers coupled with our own prayers and efforts were what pulled us through that winter. From these and other experiences I have gained a strong conviction that prayer works and that when our efforts or abilities fall short, our prayers can bring needed consolation and strength. May I encourage each of you to include your grandparents in your daily prayers.

Last night we visited with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They had been in southern Utah for a wedding for Alva Lu's grandson, Brady. Prior to going they had been working 17 hours a day in the temple learning their duties. They said they were relieved to pull away for a couple of days for the wedding. They will be moving on the 15th and 16th of November and family is gathering to help with the project. It's pretty overwhelming but they are hoping their own house doesn't sell for a while so that they will have time to sort and finish moving the nonessentials over the Christmas break. The process of sorting and discarding has been an emotional one for Grandpa Larsen especially since he has lived in that house for 45 years!

SaraKay has been busy with music and basketball. She thoroughly enjoys ball practice but is less enthusiastic about practice time on the violin and piano. This Thursday she and

Angela are playing "America" on their violins for Veterans Day assemblies at both Riverside and Rockford schools. I think they are pleased with the chance to perform. Sometimes when I go with her and I look around at all the young mothers, I feel old and I'm sure people think I've been at this parenting thing much too long, but nevertheless, I enjoy the chance to be involved with her and keep in touch with the community.

I appreciated Jonie's update on their family. We're so grateful that Alex is okay and hope that everyone will stay healthy during this flu season. Jeff and Jonie are certainly a good example of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. If Y2K causes too much grief, we can all migrate to Cass Lake and help them eat their year's supply of food! (I'm sure they would love that!)

[Dad] This morning while I was walking around the parking lot at the Church I decided to run for a while and tripped over a raised crack in the sidewalk. I fell pretty hard and am hurting in my neck and right shoulder.

I am so pleased with what we have gotten done in the downstairs. I was able to get blinds hung in the three bedrooms that haven't had them and Sue has gotten the trim painted. We just need a good block of time to paint the bathroom. She found a headboard at DI that she has stripped and painted with a treatment called "whitewash" and varnished. It looks really good and it will be on the double bed in the big bedroom as soon as make the necessary modifications to attach it to the bedframe.

Last Saturday was the University of Scouting and I had to haul all the tables from Krupp Scout Hollow and the Idaho Falls Office and set them up. I had an endowment display and helped with the Wood Badge recruiting. We also had a beading ceremony for four more of my course participants. It was a long day by the time we hauled the tables back to Idaho Falls.

November 16, 1999

[Dad] We have had an interesting week. With my limitations because of tearing up my shoulder I haven't been much good around here. However, we were able to get the beds set up in the bedrooms downstairs and the bathroom painted. There is reasonable hope that we will be able to house company for Thanksgiving.

I have been on the phone this evening with each of my siblings. What a sweet bunch of friends they truly are even though they are family. We are helping to move Dad and Alva Lu this weekend. Because of the move, there are books, furniture, and furnishings that need to be disposed of. Karen came yesterday and made up a list of the things available and we e-mailed it out. I followed up with phone calls tonight to make sure they read their mail and respond back by tomorrow night about the things that they might be interested in. Hopefully we can make this equitable and fair for everyone.

We had Stake Conference this weekend. SaraKay sang with a stake Primary Chorus. Our Stake Presidency is Devaughn Shipley, Gary Korth, and Layne VanOrden. They are wonderful leaders and have powerful messages for the stake membership.

[Mom] We were at Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's for a couple hours this afternoon making arrangements and plans for the next few days. The biggest day for all of us will be Tuesday when all the furniture will be moved, but Grandpa and Grandma have done an amazing amount of work already in packing and sorting things, emptying cupboards, closets and drawers, and preparing for moving day.

Daddy is feeling much better than he was a few days ago. His tumble really laid him up for a few days and I was reminded again at just how much I depend on him. He is so handy around the house and invaluable when we are working on projects that require his ingenuity. By Saturday he felt good enough that he was able to hang the bathroom mirror and get the beds set up downstairs. Like he said in his letter, we are trying hard to get the family room cleared out enough that we can host at Thanksgiving.

I have had an interesting experience with my Jr. Sunday school chorister's job. When I first started teaching the children, I had a hard time relating my subject matter to their level. I felt like I had good ideas but many of them were too complicated or advanced and I struggled to keep the children's attention. After wrestling with it for several weeks I decided to pray harder for inspiration to help me know how to "speak their language" better. Early one Sunday morning I awoke as Daddy was slipping out the door for his 6:30 meeting and for the next half hour I lay in bed with my mind flooded with

ideas of things to do for my singing time. I knew they were good ideas and I got up and wrote them down and used them for several very successful singing times. Twice since that first experience I have had similar inspiration come to me and I have been able to use the ideas with great success. It has been one of the most graphic and definite answers to prayers that I have ever had. I haven't told the children where the ideas come from but someday when the moment is right, I am going to share it with them. I guess the Lord is willing to help us with whatever we need; we need only ask and work to do our part.

We got home tonight at five from spending the day helping Grandpa and Grandma Larsen move. Yesterday we were able to get a lot of smaller items moved along with most of the kitchen and today we cleaned out storage rooms and moved all the big stuff. It made for a long day but now nearly everything is gone from the home place. They have a lovely new townhouse. It is three levels and the basement level has a large family room, two bedrooms, one bath, and a large storage room.

November 29, 1999

[Mom] We had a hectic but enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday. I felt especially grateful to gather as family since Dad reminded us that this will be the last one for Tim for the next three years and was the first one for Paul in three years. Tim arrived Tuesday about noon, Paul later on that evening, John, Laurel, Emma and Mike got here Wednesday early afternoon and Steve and Bonnie and family arrived on Thursday. Becky entertained Chet's family for the holiday but she and Chet joined us on Friday evening for dinner and games. We about wore out the games by the time we had played every night! SaraKay commented that her favorite thing was playing the games with her siblings.

During our Thanksgiving dinner, we each took a minute to say what we were thankful for and John and Laurel announced that they are expecting a baby in July! It will probably be born while they are in Cincinnati doing an internship with GE for the summer. Congratulations!

Hopefully all of you had a memorable holiday. This Saturday we are hosting the extended Larsen family Christmas party so tonight is "decorate the house" night for home evening. Remember the days when we would put the tree

up on Daddy's birthday? Well, this year we will have our tree up before we ever see December! SaraKay gets so excited about holidays that she keeps us involved. She won the school hoop shoot again this year, hitting 17 out of 25 shots and will now be competing in the district competition in Blackfoot. She has really enjoyed playing on the Jazz basketball team and when the neighborhood boys come over to borrow our driveway "court", she joins them.

On our way to Rexburg to return Paul and Tim to school last night, we visited with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They are enjoying their new home and feeling a little more secure in their temple responsibilities. It was fun to visit with them and take Paul and Tim on a tour of their townhouse. It's wonderful to have the move over and have them safely settled in. They attended their new ward for the first time yesterday and were pleased with how many people they already knew, including Morita Christiansen and her son, Allan, and his family.

Daddy took on the project of laying linoleum in our master bathroom over the holiday weekend. It proved to be quite a job by the time he replaced some damaged flooring which he hadn't realized he would have to do. He is very handy but commented that he thinks we'll hire the kitchen floor done when the time comes to attack that project.

[Dad] Thanksgiving was a lot of fun for all of us. We had wonderful pies—banana cream, pumpkin, apple, cherry, and lemon meringue. The turkey didn't last long enough—I love leftovers! As fun as it is to have the family gather, it is also a relief to have the party over and see every one safely back home. I hate to admit it but I kind of enjoy the relatively quiet life we have. It is a good thing we have our families while we are young—

I was reading a talk by Merrill J. Bateman wherein he told an interesting story that took place in 1885, ten years after the founding of Brigham Young Academy—the precursor to BYU. The school was dependent on local donations without much help from Church headquarters for support. The situation was quite desperate without sufficient funds to pay teachers' salaries and provide necessary supplies. Zina Young Williams, Dean of Women and a daughter of Brigham Young, went to President John Taylor to ask for Church help. "After listening to Sister

Williams's plea for help, President Taylor took her hand 'in a fatherly way' and said: 'My dear child, I have something of importance to tell you that I know will make you happy. I have been visited by your father. He came to me in the silence of the night clothed in brightness and with a face beaming with love and confidence, told me things of great importance and among others that the school being taught by Brother [Karl G.] Maeser was accepted in the heavens and was a part of the great plan of life and salvation; ... and there was a bright future in store for preparing the children of the covenant for future usefulness in the Kingdom of God, and that Christ himself was directing, and had a care over this school.'

What a wonderful story about the early history of BYU. I look at the broad influence and the good works that are being done just by my own children and have a small inkling of the strength to the kingdom of God the army of graduates from BYU are throughout the world. By no means am I putting down the other great schools that are in our midst, but there is no doubt that BYU has a divine destiny (even if it isn't necessarily manifest on the football field).

December 7, 1999

[Dad] Last week was busy, especially with getting ready for the Larsen Christmas Party on Saturday. We had a wonderful time! Karen and her kids, Gary and Linda and Ashlee, Rick and Terry and their kids, Tim, Paul, Chet and Becky and Madison, and Dad & Alva Lu all joined us. We had a great meal, thanks to everyone's help—but especially thanks to Sue and all her preparations. We had a gift exchange for all the kids 18 and under and we had a program with all that were willing to share their talents—in voice, on piano, or violin. One of the highlights was Rick's rendition of “The Innkeeper’s Song” from the Forgotten Carols. It was also nice to have Dad and Alva Lu talk a little about their temple experiences and a typical day. I think they are getting settled and content in their townhouse in Idaho Falls and with some of the weather we are starting to have, I am grateful they are not commuting from Moreland for their duties.

I have three Brainstorming sessions this week—tonight in Star Valley, tomorrow in Jackson, and Thursday in Teton District. Sue is going with me tomorrow to Jackson and we are going to eat

out over there before coming home. I am looking forward to the trip with her along.

Last Wednesday, I received a phone call informing me that my Waterfront Director this last summer—Josh Clark—and his wife had had a tragedy. I knew they were expecting triplets. Well, they came premature—she was only 20 weeks along. Their little hearts were beating, but their lungs were not developed enough and none of them took a breath. The biggest one was one pound. The funeral was Thursday in Rexburg. I arrived a little early and they hadn't closed the little casket yet. There they lay—all three of them on a receiving blanket that Heidi had made in a small coffin. She was almost inconsolable.

In closing, let me share with you a thought on success from former secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld: "Success tends to go not to the person who is error-free, because he also tends to be risk-averse. Rather it goes to the person who recognizes that life is pretty much a percentage business. It isn't making mistakes that's critical; it's correcting them and getting on with the principal task."

[Mom] All last week I kept reminding myself that once the weekend was over, I would have time to get going on my Christmas shopping. Well here I am into next week and I'm still not finding a block of time to get away and start the annual "hunt". But, if I ever get feeling sorry for myself, I just think back a few years to when we had all of you children to shop for and the overwhelming task it was to find everything. Just thinking about it makes me realize how simple Christmas is for us now.

As Daddy mentioned, tomorrow I am going with him to some meetings in Jackson Hole and then we are going out to dinner to celebrate his birthday. If any of you were thinking about phoning, please do so before nine tomorrow morning. We won't be back until very late tomorrow night. SaraKay will spend the evening with Jenks's and we are looking forward to having some time together. Hopefully the weather will stay clear and we won't be battling bad roads.

When some were here for Thanksgiving, we mentioned to you that Stan Williams had talked to Daddy about running for the state Senate next year. Jerry Twiggs isn't going to run again and they are looking for someone to take his

place. Daddy was very flattered by the suggestion and met last week with his BSA boss to discuss the possibility. As they talked through the time commitments (Jan.-Feb. and maybe into March) Kim expressed that the BSA would have to rewrite Dad's contract, adjust the wage, change some of the benefits, and that Dad's present responsibilities just couldn't be handled in a ten-month year. I ask Daddy how he felt about it and he said that although he felt honored that some members of the community felt that he would be a good choice, he suspected that BSA would not work with him to permit the absence from work for so many weeks. I know that one of our biggest concerns right now is getting our retirement funds in place and we don't want to jeopardize that.

December 13, 1999

[Mom] It's a blustery and cold day today, but Daddy has our fire downstairs stoked up and it is toasty and warm inside. I've had a busy but peaceful morning taking care of details for our ward Christmas party that will be held tomorrow night. We have some fun things planned and the Primary children are excited about their part in it. One number they will be performing is "Jingle Bells". We have metal bells for the children and they shake them vigorously while singing the chorus. I know it will be a delightful and festive part of the evening. Daddy is doing a trumpet obbligato to "O Come All Ye Faithful" that is performed by the ward choir. He hasn't had a lot of time to practice, but it is beautiful and going to add a nice touch. We have a variety of other numbers and I'm excited to see it all come together!

My thoughts have been with my parents lately. They have spent some Christmas's past on foreign soil, some moving our family to new locations, several in the mission field, and others in the homes of their children, but I suspect this Christmas will be the most difficult for them as Grandma Richards tries to adjust to living alone and Grandpa spends his first Christmas season in a rest home. Health permitting, Grandpa will be home with Grandma for Christmas Eve and on Christmas day both of them will join with Kathy and Dick in their celebration. Grandpa has been sick with respiratory flu and he is on oxygen. Grandma worries that he will be hospitalized. She appreciates the cards and letters they are receiving. She takes them with her when she

visits Dad each day and reads them to him. Nate flew in on Friday and spent until Sunday evening with them and I know that meant a lot.

Daddy and I had a little "get-away" last Wednesday. We spent some time in Idaho Falls shopping that morning and then continued on to Jackson. The trip was scenic and enjoyable despite the slick and snowy roads over the pass. Coming home we went past Palisades but it was so pitch dark that we were unable to see much. We had dinner at a great Chinese Restaurant there in Jackson and enjoyed watching the skiing crowds come in with their boots, stocking caps and parkas. It was fun to step out of our usual routine if only for a day. I appreciated the time with Daddy alone. He is a great friend as well as wonderful mate!

I spent a couple hours last night at Becky and Chet's, helping them with Madison while they had a piano recital for Becky's students. It was a big success except for the fact that they had nearly twice the attendance they had anticipated and nearly ran out of goodies. SaraKay thoroughly enjoyed entertaining Maddie. Following that, we dropped by Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's and visited with them. They sold their home to a friend of mine and will be closing on that next month.

Daddy participated in the annual stake Christmas concert last night and related a sweet experience he had while at the concert. When he went in and sat down with the ward choir, he noticed Laurie Grayson sitting in front of him with her small choir. He leaned forward and inquired as to where her husband, John, was. He is the music teacher at the high school and a gifted tenor and always on hand to support Laurie with her choir duties. She responded that he was very ill and unable to make it to the concert, leaving her choir with no tenors. Daddy asked if she would trust him to join her choir for the evening and offered to handle the tenor part since he knew the number they were performing and knew how much difference it would make to her to have all four parts. She was so appreciative of his offer and gladly accepted it. When it was time for their ward's performance, Daddy and Lynn Horrocks, another member of our choir who we have been fellowshiping, joined in and lent a hand (or shall I say, a voice). As a former choir director, I can imagine how grateful she was! I was proud of Daddy for seeing a need and being sensitive to it.

SaraKay and I went to Rexburg last Thursday to see Paul perform in a piano recital. He played so well! It's been quite a challenge for him to find time to practice this semester with the load he has been carrying but he is very disciplined and makes good use of his time. Tim also attended with us and it was fun to be on campus with them. Both of them are doing very well academically and enjoying their year. Paul has had some extremely challenging classes and he and Bret Turpin have hammered out Chemistry, Physics, and Calculus together after forgetting so much while on their missions.

Tim has thoroughly enjoyed his business classes. Last week he took an economics test and scored 88%, which was one of the highest scores given. Earlier in the semester his professor told him that he was such an asset to the class that if he earned a B+ in his class work, that he would receive an A- since his contributions to the class were so valuable. That's quite a tribute to him and his efforts.

Know that we are proud of each of you whether you are providing for your young families, home each day caring for little ones, working on a college degree, or trying to keep up with the demands of your careers. You are the "joy of our lives" and we pray always for your safety and well-being.

[Dad] The Chamber's Concert was fun last night. They had a theme of Sherlock Holmes trying to find the real Santa who had been knocked out and imprisoned in a potato cellar while a bad Santa was causing trouble all over. The kids performed very well, but most of the music was rather obscure Christmas songs that you haven't heard before and probably will never hear again—except for "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer". My favorite part of the concert was the more traditional songs that they did right at the beginning—they were beautiful!

Sue mentioned our trip to Jackson last week. I also went to Star Valley on Tuesday and to Teton (Driggs) on Thursday. Travis Wyatt, the professional that serves those districts, had done an outstanding job of putting things together. Saturday morning was our annual Choir breakfast and practice. We enjoyed the light breakfast and had a great practice, polishing off our numbers for the Stake Choir Festival and for our Christmas program in the ward. We were the concluding choir Sunday

night and did a wonderful job, even if I do say so myself. We sang, "See The Silent Lonely Stable" and "Let the Heavens Ring" and we had so much power and dramatic dynamics that it was one of the few times lately that I had a chill up my back because it was so good!

December 28, 1999

[Mom] Although Christmas is a joyous time, I always feel relieved when it comes and goes for another year. I was thinking about that the other day and wondering why it is so stressful and I decided that it is a combination of worrying over completing projects, buying just the right gift, entertaining friends and family, and finding time to meet the many social commitments that are so much a part of the season. Each year I promise myself that I'm going to simplify but invariably life gets crazy. My favorite times are the family associations and the chance to sing Christmas carols. Least favorite: standing in long lines at Wal-Mart! Anyway, we have survived another year and feel grateful for the chance to reflect on the Savior's birth and life and to share times with many of you.

Paul and Tim arrived on the 17th and John, Laurel and Emma joined us on the 18th. Mike worked things out to come home on the 20th and so we planned a temple trip for last Wednesday. We had a great time, our only regret being that Grandpa and Grandma Larsen weren't at the temple so we missed seeing them. Becky and Chet joined us while Tim and SaraKay babysat and then we gathered at their place for supper. It made for a full but rewarding afternoon and evening.

On Friday Becky and Chet and Maddie arrived about five and we finished up preparations for our Christmas Eve dinner. Following dinner, we attempted to role play the nativity and even assigned parts for Maddie and Emma. We sang some carols and then put the little ones to bed and regrouped in the dining area to play table games. It has become a tradition to play table games when everyone is here for the holidays and although I don't always participate, it's fun to hear the interaction and laughter. Things were still going strong when Daddy and I retired to bed about 11:30 so I'm not sure what time things wound down. We decided that SaraKay would be the alarm clock for the next morning and she was up so late that she let us all sleep in until 6:40. Becky and Chet brought their

camcorder and got some good shots on Christmas morning of Maddie and Emma opening their gifts.

Christmas morning Becky and Chet provided breakfast for us. We had crepes filled with all kinds of puddings and fruit fillings topped with creme, hashbrowns, bacon, and sausage, fruit drinks and milk. It was a nice variation from our usual "grab a banana and have some cereal" routine. After breakfast and a nap, they packed up things and left for Utah to spend a couple days with Chet's family.

On Sunday Mike, Paul, and Tim were scheduled to leave for Mexico and had everything packed and ready when Mike's roommate called and said that he had decided that he didn't feel good about making the trip and wouldn't be going. It was such a letdown for all the boys but we had decided several months ago when we first talked about this venture that it would only be possible if Dave (Mike's mission companion) would drive since he has a late model car and we didn't trust Mike's car to make the trip. There were so many arrangements that had been made that involved Dave that his cancelling made it impossible for the rest of them to go. In some ways I was relieved since I was nervous about them traveling to a foreign country with all the Y2k concerns but they had promised to be back in the United States by New Year's Eve. Anyway, they are here with us for the week instead of in Mexico and we are enjoying the time together. This afternoon they had dates to play volleyball and then have pizza here later.

This weekend we will be going to Salt Lake to visit Steve and Bonnie, spend the night in Provo with John and Laurel and then spend Sunday afternoon with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. The weather has been so nice that traveling for the holidays has been trouble free and we hope it continues this way until we get all the kids safely back to college.

P.S. (Wednesday) Daddy just returned from Provo. About five yesterday we received a call from John and Laurel. They had car problems and were stranded in Tremonton. Daddy left to help them make some decisions on what to do and deliver them to Provo. Poor little Emma had played in the McDonald's play area for five straight hours while John took care of getting the car and working with a mechanic to assess

the situation. They were all very grateful to arrive in Provo and finally be home.

January 2000

[Mom] Happy New Year! I guess we all survived the Y2K situation and life is moving ahead into the new millennium. I'm grateful that everyone made the necessary adjustments to their systems so that we haven't had any problems; hopefully the balance of the year will be as peaceful as the transition was on Friday.

SaraKay and I spent part of the day on Friday watching a PBS program that showed the celebrations throughout the world as the new millennium dawned. It was so interesting to see the different cultures and peoples and reassuring that in nearly all the lands the theme of "Good will towards Men" seemed to prevail. I was touched by the goodness and beauty we saw as we traveled via television to Australia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Iceland, Russia, Japan, and a host of other nations. We witnessed a wedding in Norway that took place in an immense ice cathedral among the Laplanders and watched in amazement at Maori warriors during a spectacular rowing exhibition involving 1500 warriors in native costume as conch shells heralded the coming of the new millennium!

I know many of you saw similar programs and probably felt as I did- grateful for this wonderful planet and its precious inhabitants.

Another wonderful experience we had last week was attending Ryan's wedding. The wedding was at 8:30 Thursday morning and we had made arrangements to pick up Becky and leave Tim and Sara Kay to babysit Madison while we were in the temple. It was special to have Mike and Paul also home and able to attend with us. Grandpa Larsen performed the ceremony to a "standing room only" crowd and did a fine job. Both the bride and groom came from large active families and it was thrilling to see the support from friends and family. Ryan and McKenzie are honeymooning for a few days and will continue their schooling in Logan.

John and Laurel left on Tuesday to make the trip back to Provo and had car trouble in Tremonton. What normally would be a three- and one-half hour trip ended up as an eight-hour marathon. I was so grateful that Daddy's schedule was such that he was able to help them.

While John was taking care of business, Laurel entertained Emma for five hours in the

Tremonton McDonald's. I'm sure both of them were exhausted by the time the day was over!

Mike, Paul and Tim left Thursday afternoon for Provo. Paul and Tim have wanted to visit Mike but the opportunity hadn't presented itself until this holiday break. It was a fun time to be in Provo with all the New Year celebrations going on. Our original plan to visit my folks the first of last week had been adjusted when the boys decided to cancel the Mexico trip and so it worked nicely for us to accomplish all our objectives in one trip.

We were able to borrow a tow Dollie from Ron Mangum and tow it to the service station in Tremonton where John's car was parked. We arrived in Tremonton and secured the car to the tow Dollie and pulled it around behind the station where we had arranged to pick it up on our return trip on Sunday. We continued on to Tooele and had a pleasant visit with Steve and Bonnie before leaving for Provo about six.

When Steve and Bonnie heard the news on Tuesday regarding John's car, they had offered their little Datsun to John to use until their new car is ready in April. We had secured all the paper work from the court house here to sign it over and secure the title and we were able to take care of that while we were in Tooele. I drove the Datsun and Daddy followed us in the pickup. The only glitch came in that we ran into heavy fog and could hardly see the road signs between Tooele and the airport. SaraKay was invaluable to me as the navigator as we crept along. Once we were past the airport, the fog cleared off and we continued on, arriving in Provo about eight. Mike, Paul, and Tim joined us at John and Laurel's where we spent the night and attended church with them on Sunday before leaving for Salt Lake about 11:00. We stopped by the rest home and picked up Grandpa Richards. Grandma had arranged for us to check him out for the afternoon and visit with him at their condo.

We arrived soon after sacrament meeting was over and had a chance to visit with several members of the branch leadership. They were free with their praise of Grandpa and what a valuable member of the branch he is. Several members of the staff also commented on how much they think of Grandpa and how sweet and appreciative he is to them as they perform their duties. It was reassuring to see that the people

at the rest home have a high regard for him and treat him accordingly.

When we arrived at Grandma Richards, Kathy and Dick were there and we had a lovely dinner and visited before they left to attend their meetings. Before leaving about three, we checked Grandpa back into the rest home. Our trip was a little longer because of our stop in Tremonton to get the car but we had clear roads and arrived home without incident.

Paul and Tim have been getting things ready to return to college tomorrow. Daddy will take them before he goes to work in Idaho Falls. We've been doing laundry, cutting hair, organizing scrapbooks, grocery shopping, and taking care of other details. It started storming today and I felt grateful that everyone got back to Provo safely before this weather set in.

[Dad] Last week was a pretty full work week for me as I was trying to get a lot of things to come together for my year end goals. After all was said and done, even though we didn't get a gold record last year, we did have a very successful year in growing the endowment and ended up with 21 new James E. West Fellows for the year. I have my year-end review next week and feel good about most of my "Criticals."

Another big event of the week was the Bi-stake youth dance for New Year's Eve that our stake hosted. Part of Friday was spent decorating and setting things up for the big night. We had a good crowd, lots of food, good music, plenty of noise makers and hats, and I think the kids had a great time. For intermission, we had a swing dance demonstration by a bunch of kids that had been practicing for a couple of months. They did a wonderful job and I think it piqued interest and should help to promote the Dance Festival Youth conference this summer.

At the stroke of midnight, we had a net full of balloons that dumped onto the floor and then a fireworks display shot up from the ball fields behind the Church and everyone went outside to enjoy the sight. Sue and SaraKay watched it from home and some of the explosions rattled our windows.

January 11, 2000

[Dad] Life continues to be full of unexpected experiences. Over the weekend I was asked to join with a few other Wood Badgers to sing at a funeral for Norm Holman, a Scouter from

Pocatello and Rick's former bishop. At the funeral, we were requested to be in uniform and then to act as an honor guard while the casket was wheeled out. We sang "On My Honor" and "Scout Vespers" and then added the last two lines of the Gilwell chorus: Back to Gilwell, happy land! I'm going to work my ticket if I can." Sister Holman embraced us and said how much she appreciated all we had done for Norm over the last few years. He came to Wood Badge three years ago and was assigned to the Owl squad. We found out that his first wife, who died about 10 years ago, loved owls and collected them and his house was full of owls. Coincidence? Rick was also on the program and sang a beautiful solo, "How Great Thou Art"--which was Norm's favorite hymn.

Yesterday morning I found out that Jerry Twiggs, President Pro Temp of the Senate was out jogging and apparently had a heart attack and died. He was found face down in a park in Boise and an autopsy confirmed that no foul play was involved.

It is my responsibility as Legislative District Chairman to call together the precinct committeemen in Legislative District #31 and to make recommendations to Governor Kempthorne as to whom the local Republican Party would like appointed to take Jerry's place. In respect to Jerry and his family we aren't doing anything until after the funeral which will be this Friday. With sixteen precincts in Bingham County and four in Butte there are a prospective group of 20 to gather for this momentous decision. Apparently, Stan Williams is willing to move from the House to the Senate, and then we would be choosing Stan's replacement. What an awesome responsibility to be in the heart of these selections.

It is a paradox to me that two of the healthiest and most health-conscious men I have known have died prematurely in the last two months--Marvin Wray of cancer and Jerry of a heart attack. The Lord has his own timetable for our lives!

[Mom] Daddy has had so many pressures on him lately that I know it has been hard for him to keep pace with it all. Sunday night after being up since five and going strong all day to meetings, choir practices, youth meetings, and ward conferences, he was pretty worn out and

wondered how he would ever get done this week everything that he was facing.

Yesterday the phone started to ring and by the time the day was over, I had taken a multitude of calls. Some were in regards to the upcoming youth standards night, many were about the political ramifications of the passing of Jerry Twiggs, and others dealt with scouting.

Jerry's death has begun a string of events that Daddy will be involved in and hopefully he will have the time to take care of it all. Meanwhile, I am here at home trying to do all I can to lighten his load.

Before I left for Blackfoot, I packed a bag with a bunch of paper work that I've needed to get to and by the time the car was lubed and repaired, I had been sitting at Blackfoot Motors for two and a half hours. Needless to say, I had enough time to pretty thoroughly go over my paperwork and other items and I was grateful that I wasn't just sitting that entire time.

I spent a great deal of time last week preparing the ward annual history. I was called as the ward history specialist in October and at that time I distributed a letter to ward members requesting information that I needed from each family in order to complete the history. Last week I began phoning and writing and I am finally beginning to feel like I will meet my January 15th deadline. It has been an enormous task, made more so by the fact that I was called so late in the year, but I feel good about my efforts and know that the Lord will be pleased with what I have collected.

I also asked my neighbor, Bruce Ellis, who worked with the Scouts last year, to write up a summary of the troop's experiences at Island Park Scout Camp. When he brought over his completed summary, it was seven pages long! It was fun for Daddy to read about the ward's experiences in his camp and to feel like part of their success was a result of his (Dad's) efforts as camp director.

Daddy mentioned the ongoing drama in Provo with John and Laurel. We have been so concerned about them and keep hoping and praying that the little Datsun will hold together until they make it to May. Car problems are always stressful but when you are a student, living on a student's income, car problems loom bigger than life. Although it was a long time ago when Daddy and I were struggling to make ends

meet in Provo, the memories of those struggles are still pretty vivid and I know how hard it is. We appreciate everyone's concern and prayers. As of last night, the battery problem had been corrected and John thought they were off and running. Remember them in your prayers.

Yesterday Grandpa and Grandma Larsen dropped by after loading their pickup full of things from the shed behind the home place. They were waiting for Rick and Daddy who were helping at the aforementioned funeral. As they came in the door, I noticed that Grandpa had a new bruise by his eye and swelling on the side of his face. He had fallen while carrying some things downstairs and had badly bruised up his face and hurt his shoulder and side. I never cease to marvel that he is able to bounce back from these falls. Alva Lu recounted that she had taken a spill off a small step stool and had hit so hard on the tile floor that she saw stars, felt nauseous, and had to crawl to the carpet and lay for about 15 minutes before she felt like she could get up. I know that both of them are under tremendous stress right now with finalizing the sale of the home, cleaning out the last of their possessions, and dealing with all the responsibilities at the temple.

This new calling has so complicated their life and I watch their dedication and admire them so much for all they are willing to do to answer a call from the Lord. Last week when Grandpa dropped in to visit after collecting some things from the house, he nearly fell asleep mid-sentence. He realized it and apologized but said that he had been up since 3:30 that morning! What an example he and Alva Lu are to all of us and what a legacy of service they are leaving to their posterity. We love them!

January 17, 2000

[Mom] As Dad mentioned in his letter last week Jerry Twiggs, pro tern of the Idaho Senate, had a heart attack and died. His demise put into motion the process to replace him and Daddy, as Legislative District Chairman, has the responsibility to organize and conduct the meeting, notify precinct committeemen, circulate lists to those interested in running or lobbying, and meet with the press to release information at the appropriate time. Since this process is a fairly rare occurrence, anyone interested in running or lobbying, or anyone with responsibilities as a precinct member, has

called to talk it over and find out what's going on. Potential candidates have phoned to visit with Dad about who is running and what his advice would be to them. This whole process has taken place almost entirely on the phone since the state house in Boise made it very clear to everyone that nothing should transpire, including press releases, until Jerry was laid to rest. It has been an wild week for Dad, and for me, his answering service here at home.

Just last night Tom Moss called and "tossed his hat in the ring". We had thought of him a few weeks ago but at that time he wasn't interested. I guess he has had a lot of people approaching him about it and decided to give it a go. Anyway, that changes the complexion of the entire process now and notification to everyone concerned needs to take place no later than tonight. Although it has been chaotic, I think Daddy has quite enjoyed being in the middle of things and feeling like he handled things fairly and professionally. We have several fine people interested in the vacancy and hopefully it will be filled with someone who will be a strong advocate for good.

This process has reminded me again of the genius of the democratic process and of the importance of getting involved. When I was on the school board, we would have an issue brought before us that I had strong feelings about and I realized that had I not been on the board, my perspective may not have been presented. It's reassuring to know that even us "grass roots" people have a voice in what happens.

Despite all his pressures this past week, I did convince Dad to go with me to the DOE Site last Thursday and inspect some small S10 Chevy pickups that were up for bid. I had previously called Lisa's husband, Don, and asked his advice about bidding on them because while he lived in Washington, he would bid on government surplus at Hanford and then if he got more that he wanted, he would fix them up and sell them. Don sent me a check list of things to inspect and talked to me for a long time on the phone the night before we were to make our bids. It took us about a half an hour to drive to the location and we were the only ones there for the hour we inspected the vehicles. They all looked in such good condition that it was hard to not bid on all of them. Some had trailer hitches, one had large toolboxes mounted

on the bed, one even had a nice fiberglass camper shell on the back. We walked from pickup to pickup, making notes, checking everything Don told us to, and finally bid on five of them. Once we got out there, I could hardly get Daddy to leave. There were numerous vans, two ambulances, and other items also up for bid and it was interesting to contemplate just what they would all be sold for. Anyway, we took a leap of faith, paid our bid deposit, sealed our bids, and drove home, all before noon on Thursday. The bids are opened tomorrow at two so we should know within a few days if we have bought a little pickup (or five little pickups).

SaraKay competed at the area hoop shoot last Saturday and took home a second-place trophy again. She only shot 11 of 25 but that was good enough. She was pretty happy and so were we since we don't have to go on to another competition! Not really! We would have gladly taken her to the next one if she had taken first, but she seemed pleased with her win and so were we.

Other news items: Tim got an infection in his foot and it nearly crippled him before he realized it was serious and he needed to get in to the doctor. He seems to be doing better and able to traverse campus a little better now. He and Paul are enjoying their new roommates, including their cousin, Curtis, who returned from Italy the last of December.

Mike is in the throes of filling out forms for his interview with the committee that recommends students to dental schools. He called Randy's contact who is on the admittance committee at Iowa University and had a good visit with him. He has had to get several letters of recommendation from professors as well as beginning his preparation for the DAT. I guess the longest journey begins with a single step (as Randy can confirm) but Mike is making a beginning and hoping to have things pretty well in line before he returns home in May to work at Basic with Paul.

Next Monday Daddy has to be in Provo to interview students that may want to work at camp next summer. He is going Sunday evening with some other professional scouts and I will make the trip on Monday, spend part of the day with my Dad at the rest home and with Mom, and then continue on to Provo to spend Monday

night and Tuesday morning with John and Laurel and hopefully get to see Mike, too.

Last night was the musical program the stake YW and YM sponsored which included a lot of young people in the musical numbers. There was such a crowd that the cultural hall was filled half way back as well as the chapel and overflow area. Daddy felt great about how well it had gone!

[Dad] I don't really have much to add to Sue's report of last week. Dad and Alva Lu are driving to Salt Lake today and leaving tomorrow for Israel for a ten-day trip. When I dropped in to see them yesterday, they were both so tired—I sure hope they can get some rest in conjunction with this trip and the two-week closing of the temple. By the way, they went to the doctor yesterday and found that Dad had broken his shoulder last week when he fell and he has a brace to wear to help hold things in place and minimize the discomfort.

Let me share a thought with you that I gave at the staff meeting yesterday: It took 32 years of failures for dedicated climbers to reach the top of Mt. Everest, a peak scaled so often now it hardly makes the newspaper! At over 29,000 feet of altitude, snow never melts atop Mt. Everest. Sometimes winds at the summit reach 200 miles per hour.

George Leigh-Mallory is first recorded as attempting the climb in 1921. On his third try, in 1924, he disappeared into the mist, never to be seen again. The mountain had won. But friends of Mallory one day gazed upon a large picture of Mt. Everest and declared, "Mt. Everest, you defeated us once. You defeated us twice. You defeated us three times. But, Mt. Everest, we shall some day defeat you because you can't get any bigger -- and we can!"

Eight more attempts were made on the mountain resulting in eight more failures. But finally, along came Edmund Hillary in 1953, who, along with his guide, conquered the peak for the first time!

Failure comes only after one has given up. If slim to none are the odds of winning, they might be worth taking. For we can always get bigger - bigger in ability; bigger in experience; bigger in wisdom; bigger in faith. Robert F. Kennedy reminded us that, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."

Sen. Hubert Humphrey, a man with an indomitable zest for living, once talked about the "good old days." He said, "They were never that good, believe me. The good new days are today, and better days are coming tomorrow. Our greatest songs are still unsung."

There is an intriguing story about a bishop back in the 1870s. The bishop had charge of a small denominational college. Annually, he visited the school and stayed in the home of the president.

The bishop was a narrow thinker with a dim view of the future. He told the school president during one of those visits that everything that could be invented had already been invented. The administrator disagreed. "In 50 years," he contested, "people will learn to fly like birds." That kind of talk greatly disturbed the bishop. "Flight is reserved for birds and angels," he said emphatically, "and you, sir, are guilty of blasphemy!" The name of the bishop was Milton Wright. That name may not have a great deal of meaning to you, but something else will. You see, back at home, this clergyman had two enthusiastic sons -- Orville and Wilbur -- who believed that our greatest songs were still unsung! The rest of the story is one of an enthusiastic belief in tomorrow. You know how it ends. Welcome to a new year! A new era! A new century! A new millennium! A new beginning!

January 24, 2000

[Mom] I tried to participate last night in the family chat but technical difficulties made it pretty frustrating. For some reason the connection didn't close our phone lines and so every time the phone rang, I lost my connection. I would read the comments from various family members and when I was about to contribute, someone else would have changed the subject and my contributions would have been obsolete even before I could type them in. SaraKay was at my side saying, "Say something, Mom!" but I am just not as quick witted as the rest of you and by the time I finished laughing at someone's comment, the dialogue had moved to something else. I am going to try again next week, with Daddy at my side.

Steve and Bonnie sold their home on Saturday and need to be out by February 5th. They are in Logan today house hunting. They have located several homes on the internet that they are interested in. The weekend that they need to move is a good one for us since we have to be in

Salt Lake that Saturday for a Scout Recognition Banquet and so we can help.

Paul is interviewing with Intel in a couple of weeks for a summer internship. He was frantically getting a resume put together to submit this week and then the interviews will come later. Today he called and said that he is one of 50 nominees from Ricks for the Spori Scholarship which is full tuition plus at BYU for the next two years. More forms to fill out and letters. He seemed happy with the nomination although he knows it's a long shot.

I was on the phone this morning with USU NASA Consortium checking into scholarship money for next year and I discovered that the fellow that administers the program for Utah is a close friend of an old boyfriend of mine. When we made the connection, we had a good visit and he really became helpful. He offered to call a close friend of his who frequently hires interns from USU for summer work at INEEL and see if anything is available for this summer.

Daddy's week was wild. He was interviewed by all the TV stations in the area and several newspapers carried stories in which he was quoted. The meeting Tuesday night went off without a hitch and many people were very complimentary of how well he handled things. The final meeting will be this Wednesday evening at which time they will determine who will replace Stan Williams in the House since he was chosen to replace Jerry Twiggs in the Senate.

Dad has been involved in the selections and interviewing for camp staff. He is quite pleased with how things are shaping up. He has almost all of his main positions filled and feels like he has some experience and strength in those he has chosen. I'm still planning on being in charge of the Trading Post with SaraKay. Hopefully we can do what is required and enjoy a summer with Daddy in the wilds. I wish that the Scouts paid enough that Mike, Paul, and Tim could join us but financially it isn't that sweet a deal.

Daddy is at Provo today and tomorrow recruiting at a Job Fair and tonight he will be going to John and Laurel's for home evening with Mike joining them.

February 1, 2000

[Mom] It's snowing today. I keep hoping that winter is almost over even though I know in

Idaho we can't plan on much spring until into April. It's not nearly as hard for me to endure winter now that I don't have preschoolers. It is hard to be cooped up and feel like you can't take the kids outdoors to work off their energy and your stress. Grandma Ilene used to say to me when I would call in late January and complain, "Hold on. Just a few more weeks and spring will be here and life will be brighter."

Last Wednesday Daddy finished up his political business. He is still involved with camp preparations and his endowment work but the phone has quit ringing incessantly. SaraKay and I began removing the wall paper in her bedroom today to get her room updated and painted. I thought I would do the family room first but we want to be sure the money is in place for new carpet before we begin the project. I figure I can do SaraKay's bedroom for the price of the paint since the carpet and furniture are okay. I have been cleaning closets, drawers, kitchen cupboards, and thoroughly enjoying myself. It always improves my outlook to have things clean and organized.

Things are moving ahead with Tim and mission preparations. He is starting his shot series in Rexburg and getting his mission physical at the clinic on campus. We are able to take care of these things in Rexburg for a fraction of the cost and he needs to have most of this stuff done by April 1st when his papers go in. Next week he is coming home on Tuesday to speak at a stake standards night on modesty. He prepared his speech while he was home for Christmas. I'm excited for him. Girls, ages 8-18, are invited so even SaraKay will be able to attend with me.

This week is a critical one for Steve and Bonnie as they tie together all the details of house closings and getting moved. We will be in Salt Lake this weekend for several events and it would work best for us to help them this weekend but I know it's difficult to hurry some of these things along.

Tim spent the weekend in Provo with the bunch there. Curtis drove down and Tim went along and visited John, Laurel, and Mike. Becky spent Thursday-Sunday in California with Steph and Linds. Chet has had several business trips lately and Becky used some of their frequent flyer miles to take a trip of her own. Maddie loved having Steph's kids to play with and they were very attentive and good to her. Becky said that

one night Maddie was so tired she slept straight through the night for 11 hours!

I have been thinking about this summer and our stay in Island Park. At this writing, Mike will be here at home for the summer and working at Basic American, Paul may or may not be here depending on what happens with Intel. Tim will be working in the San Diego area and SaraKay, Dad, and I will be spending our summer at scout camp.

We drove to Idaho Falls last night and had a good visit with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. It was interesting to hear the details of their trip to Israel. Grandpa took some videos of the sites they visited. The flight was 33 hours by the time you include layovers, so they were tired and suffering from jet lag. I was glad that they had yesterday and today to do some recuperating. Tomorrow they begin their temple assignment again.

My mom and dad are doing fine. Grandma had a birthday last Saturday. Nate flew in from Billings, picked up Grandpa from the rest home and he spent that night and most of the next day with them. They all went to dinner Saturday night and had a fun time with Kathy and Dick and also Tenille, Nates' daughter who is working in the Salt Lake area. We will have time with them this weekend before we attend the scout banquet. We are giving Grandma our old printer to use when she gets her new computer. She needs to be able to access the internet for her genealogical research and I have been anxious to get her on e-mail. I think it is amazing how computer literate she is for someone her age.

Tomorrow I am helping with the Gerri Wheeler funeral. She passed away last Friday night at home from ovarian cancer. She was ready to go and it was a great blessing that she didn't have to suffer too much. What peace the gospel brings when we face the frightening specter of death. My heart goes out to the families of the four missionaries who died in Iowa in that terrible car accident.

[Dad] I missed writing last week because I was in Provo. I went down on Sunday night, taking our white car to John and Laurel. We had a display in the Wilkinson Center and were recruiting summer camp staff. It was fun to have John and Mike drop in and visit.

Monday evening Mike took me to see the library add-on. How impressive! The campus is sure

different from when I was there 30 years ago. Monday night, we had FHE together and I gave a brief lesson. We had a wonderful dinner that Sue sent down with me and the college kids split up the leftovers. John and Laurel and Emma took me back to my motel and took advantage of the swimming pool. Emma has no fear! She loved the water and would hardly get out when it was time to leave. The time with family was the highlight of my trip to Provo.

Wednesday night was the final meeting of my legislative district candidate selections. It was a little less hectic than the previous week. We started the meeting half an hour later than last week, but because of the necessity of multiple ballots and caucusing ended up getting out at about the same time. We chose Tom Moss as our #1 choice and he was appointed by Governor Kempthorne the following afternoon. Janet Aikele from Arco and Richard Polatis were the number two and three choices. I am relieved to have that whole process over and to feel good about the choices that were made and the way in which we accomplished the task and were able to involve Butte County.

Thursday night I had another dozen camp staff interviews and am pleased with this summer's staff. Sam and I are meeting to go over our staff training schedule and to make some final cuts. I have also been working out designs for T-shirts and patches. Sandwiched into all of this I am trying to make a few endowment visits and commitments as well.

February 8, 2000

[Mom] Tim will be arriving early this afternoon from Rexburg to participate in our stake's RS/Young Women/Primary activity which includes a fashion show, skit, music and guest speakers (Tim and Caryn Esplin). We are both excited and a little anxious for him since he will be the only young man there. They have invited Daddy to come along to keep Tim company.

Next Monday he will fly to San Diego for testing before he can be licensed to sell in California. It is a one-day quick trip; hopefully he will be able to accomplish what he goes for and not have to return a second time. He is due to report for work two days after his last final in April.

Paul has his interview with Intel tomorrow and his Spori application is due on Friday. He sent

us his resume and essay to critique and Daddy and I have given a few suggestions.

Mike, too, is in the throes of filling out forms and collecting letters for the committee he interviews with regarding dental school. His DAT will be taken before he leaves to come home for his summer job. He is involved with a lot of dating and works part-time for a company that he does internet research for.

SaraKay won second place in the county hoop shoot and now has two identical trophies on her desk. She was selected as a representative from Riverside School to attend a special workshop given by a concert pianist who will be giving a concert the night before and will work with area piano students the following day one-on-one. Last week she had her art work selected by a local business and it was published in the newspaper. She will be awarded \$10 at an assembly on Friday. She is glad to get some cash coming in since we are in the process of redoing her bedroom.

We are grateful that Steve and Bonnie completed their move and can prepare for the arrival of their baby. They have a beautiful home that sits in the foothills above Wellsville. When we arrived late Thursday night at their Tooele home, they had almost everything packed up and cleaned and the Eider's quorum had loaded most of the heavy furniture and boxes. Friday morning, we completed the task and were on our way to Logan by 11:00.

Bonnie's folks met us at the new house and between them, Bonnie's aunt and uncle, and the rest of us we were able to have the moving truck unloaded and returned by that afternoon. Of course, unloading the boxes is always a lot more time-consuming, but knowing that everything was completed in Tooele and safely delivered to Wellsville was a tremendous relief. We were grateful to be able to help them.

As I drove the pickup from Tooele, following the U-Haul truck being driven by Daddy, I kept thinking of all the moves we've made and how awful they can be! Some of our most traumatic experiences have been associated with moves. I remember a phone call I got late one night from a teary Steph when they were moving to Indiana and had taken an exit only to discover that the exit was flooded out and Linds had to try to back the U-Haul truck plus the car they were towing back up the off ramp in the middle

of the night. Then there was Shaunnie and Randy's move to Iowa when they arrived to find their apartment in Iowa City under water due to the heavy flooding.

When Steph and Linds moved back from Indiana, Steph and the three kids were flying back and Linds was driving the moving van and when Linds delivered them to the airport they discovered that in their planning they had failed to account for the time zone change and nearly missed their flight.

When David and Andrea with little Laurel got stranded on the freeway in 100-degree weather when their Oldsmobile had problems on their move to Dallas. Becky and Chet's U-Haul catching on fire near the 33rd South Exit and all of us waiting along the side of the freeway for U-Haul to send us help. Also, John and Laurel's borrowed car's battery dying on them, leaving them stranded the morning after they arrived in Connecticut! Shauntel's ordeal trying to move most of their stuff alone with Randy's heavy involvement in school and the pressure to get the move made before they flew to Salt Lake and Idaho the Christmas they had Camille sealed to them. The list could go on and on. It feels good to have one more move completed!

Saturday we left Steve and Bonnie's and headed for Salt Lake and Grandma Ilene's. SaraKay stayed with Grandma while Daddy and I attended an awards banquet at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building and enjoyed a night at the Inn at Temple Square.

Sunday morning, we attended sacrament meeting with Grandpa Richards at the rest home. I knew that there was an organized church branch that served the residents but I had never attended any of their meetings. At about 9:30 the presidency of the branch and their wives went from room to room inviting the residents to the meeting and those who wanted to attend were assisted to get there. They had an area adjoining the dining hall which was nicely furnished with a podium, a sacrament table and chairs, and an organ. A group of deacons and priests from a Salt Lake ward blessed and passed the sacrament and a small group of Primary children sang a special musical number. The prayers were offered by residents.

The branch presidency assisted with the prayers if needed and a microphone on a long cord allowed the one offering the prayer to remain

seated. When the sacrament was passed, each member of the branch presidency and their wives assisted the residents with the bread and cup if they needed help. It was such a loving atmosphere and the Spirit was sweet and strong. Grandpa Arch was dressed in a white shirt, tie, and sports coat. He looked very "spiffy" and it was obvious from the comments we received that he is admired and loved.

I kept thinking as I participated in the service that the Lord loves all his children and how wonderful and appropriate it is that these people have the opportunity each week to worship and renew their covenants just as each of us do. I was grateful for the opportunity to join with my dad and hear him bear his testimony again.

Following the meeting and a brief visit, we returned to Grandma's for lunch. We took a printer to Grandma which she is going to use when she gets her new computer system. She is learning to do research on the internet. She said that she could get totally immersed in her genealogical work she enjoys it so much. I'm sure it also fills her days with joy and purpose as she adjusts to life without Daddy there.

[Dad] Last night was rewarding. The cultural hall at the church was full of mothers and daughters. There was a skit and fashion show with young girls, teens, and mothers modeling clothes that had been modified to make them modestly acceptable. Then Tim was introduced and he gave a wonderful talk. He had prepared it during Christmas break and had been memorizing it in spare moments. He looked sharp and delivered his message so well! He had many compliments on his talk--mothers who said their daughters had said, "If that's what it takes to get a boy like that-I'll do it!"

Bobbi Young, who had asked him to talk, cried as she told him he had said exactly what she had wanted said and that no one could have done it better. It was a late night as I drove him back to Rexburg. But, it was fun to visit with him on the way and to see Paul for a few minutes.

I have been trying to refine the personnel decisions on my staff and get contracts out. I am excited about this summer and feel that we will have a great staff. The biggest challenge is going to be preparation of the physical plant with construction and remodeling done in time. There is such a short time from when the snow

melts and we get into camp and when we have to be ready for Wood badge and staff week.

February 16, 2000

[Mom] Dad announced the news of the arrival of Jared Morris, 9 lb. 3 oz. on Tuesday, February 15th. Steve called about noon with the good news. He had taken Bonnie into the hospital at about six that morning after taking Rachel to her great Aunt Cecelia's, who lives in Logan. Sunday evening, I called Steve to find out how things were going and he reported that Bonnie was in a lot of discomfort and pretty much confined to bed. As we talked over the situation, I offered to take the children for a few days since the doctor told them that if the baby hadn't arrived by this Friday, he would induce labor. We decided to meet halfway the next morning and I would bring Nathan and Chrissy here for a while and relieve the situation there. All went according to plans and by Monday morning at 11:00, I had two little visitors from Wellsville. We made a quick trip to the library, getting about 30 children's books and a bag of Disney videos.

When we returned from SaraKay's music lesson, everyone settled in to watch TV. They were sitting on the bench eating a snack and watching my small kitchen TV when I heard the sound of the alarm come over the station. I ignored it, but in a few minutes, it sounded again, and I turned to see what was going on. Across the screen were the words "Tornado warning in effect for Bannock and Bingham county from 3:45-4:47! I had noticed a gathering storm as I waited for SaraKay's lesson and the sky continued to blacken and the wind increased in intensity. I called to SaraKay, grabbed Nathan and Chrissy, and the four of us headed downstairs to the storage room. Within a minute I realized that I needed some matches to light candles in case the power went out so I hurried upstairs, grabbed matches and returned to the basement. We gathered some buckets for chairs, put down a big blanket on the floor, lit some storage candles, and waited. In just a few minutes the sound of the storm howled and the house was pelleted with what sounded like hail. Almost immediately the power failed and we were four wide-eyed people sitting in the dimly lit safety of the storage room.

SaraKay, remembering her experiences with the wind and our rolling tent, was probably as frightened as Nate and Chrissy, but we told

stories, sang songs, and tried to make the best of this interesting turn of events. Luckily, I had my watch on and we knew what time it was and so when the appointed hour arrived, we emerged, unscathed, from our hideout. The storm was still raging so we called the neighbors to see if the danger was passed. The only phone that worked was my office one and I couldn't help noticing as I phoned Hanni's that Derek and Kyle and Erik Ellis were out running around, playing in the wind! It made us, down in the storage room, look a little ridiculous, but far be it from me to flirt with danger.

Although the danger was passed, we were now faced with a new challenge: no power and supper unprepared! Little did I realize that we would be without power for the next 30 hours. That proved to be a most interesting challenge! Luckily, we had large candles, plenty of flashlights, a wood-burning stove to keep us warm, and food in the cupboards that could be easily prepared. When Daddy returned home that night from work, he filled us in on the news that school for Snake River and Blackfoot had been canceled for Tuesday, thus eliminating some of the stress of living without water and power. Our situation was complicated by what Nate termed "his vacation" at our house. He and Chrissy became inseparably attached to their flashlights and Nate's biggest dilemma was that before long, none of the toilets would flush. I knew that we were on limited flushes once the power was out, but he didn't realize that and so it wasn't too long before our flushing allowance was met and he was perplexed as to what to do then. Yesterday about three he came to me and said, "Go stinky, but the toilet won't work so I'm going to hold it until I go home."

Well, that was a noble gesture, but I wasn't sure it was feasible, so he and I carried a five-gallon container of stored water from the storage room and filled the toilet tank, and wa-la! it worked again. It didn't take long to figure out that I could boil water for washing dishes, cook chili, fry hamburgers, and a host of other things on the metal top of my wood burning stove. The stove that has for years been on my "least favorite" list because of smoke and other problems, all at once became my dearest ally. We were fed and toasty warm and comfortable playing in the game room with the puzzles, dolls, and other things. Bedtimes included stories by candlelight and my only regret was that several of the books

I checked out at the library dealt with monsters which normally would have been fun, but when read by candlelight, became a little spooky.

Yesterday when Daddy got home from work we were low on drinking water and ready to escape the house for a few minutes. He drove us in to Rupe's for an ice cream and we filled our thermos and headed home for bedtime. Nate and Chrissy manned their flashlight and we read stories, got into pajamas, and had prayers. They were fast asleep when the power sprung to life and we gave a cheer (and took baths!)

The first thing Nate said this morning was, "I can't find my flashlight, Grandma. I showed him the nightlight that was burning brightly and announced, "Guess what? We have power!" I've been thankful all morning for small wonders including running water, refrigeration, electric lights, and even a computer!

Aside from our tornado adventures, the weekend adventure of the Four Days of Valentine was a special treat! Daddy really outdid himself and put a lot of excitement into my holiday. We had the opportunity to be in the temple on Thursday for a session in conjunction with a conference visit and then again on Saturday to see Sue Fife and Jeff Cook sealed. It was a sweet occasion, especially since they requested that Allan do the sealing. Paul was there to witness the wedding of Matt Gardner and our schedules were such that we were able to see both him and Grandpa for a short visit after the ceremonies.

Tim spent part of the weekend in Provo for job orientation and flew to California on Sunday, tested on Monday, and returned to resume classes on Tuesday. He was worn out from it all and trying to catch up with things he missed by being gone on Monday. Paul's interview with Intel wasn't! The woman who was doing the interviewing ask him what his major was and promptly informed him that there had been a mix-up and he was not in the right field to be applying and didn't even interview him! Good thing he didn't have his heart set on the offer. Best go. I'm speaking in a Blackfoot ward tonight on "Creating a Celestial Environment in the Home".

[Dad] Sorry to be a little late with this family letter, but we have been without power since 4:00 Monday afternoon until 9:00 last night. I don't know how many of you know about the

tornado that hit Eastern Idaho Monday afternoon causing significant damage to trees, mobile homes, trampolines, cellars, wheel lines, and even circles. We were right in the corridor where it ripped through on its way to Wyoming with wind gusts up to 86 miles per hour in Bingham County. It took off part of the roof of Snake River High School and Rockford Elementary. School was cancelled in Snake River for Tuesday and today. We had Nathan and Christine here to take some of the pressure off Steve and Bonnie and she had her baby yesterday. I have been kidding Nathan about being the brother of Jared—Mahonri Moriancumer. He failed to see the humor!

Last Friday, a friend told me about a workshop he had with some husbands, reminding them of how important their relationship was with their wife and ways to put some romance back into their relations. I decided to implement a modified 12 days of Christmas—namely the Four Days of Valentines. I put some candy under Sue's pillow that night, bought her a corsage for the Stake Sweetheart Ball on Saturday, gave her an African Violet on Sunday, and a Teddy Bear on Monday. It was one of the funnest Valentine's I have ever had.

I'm going to Island Park Scout Camp tomorrow to haul lumber in to the lodge for the kitchen remodel. We have craftsmen that will go in on snow machines to do the work. Fall River Electric has a big snow cat that they will haul the lumber in with. Normally, we can't get into camp until the end of May and I was concerned about getting the work done before Wood Badge uses the camp the third week of June.

February 23, 2000

[Mom] I arrived home last night about 10:30 from Steve and Bonnie's. Daddy and SaraKay met me halfway and Steve brought me the other half from Wellsville. Last Sunday Daddy, Tim, Paul, SaraKay, and I left following our meetings to go to Steve and Bonnie's to see the new baby and I stayed on for a couple of days to help out. The rest of the family drove home that night and then spent the holiday on Monday together. Before the day was over, Daddy drove Paul and Tim back to Rexburg and SaraKay went to Becky's to help out with Madison for a few hours.

That night Daddy and SaraKay attended the Kohansky concert at the civic center (it originally

was scheduled for the high school auditorium but after the tornado took part of the roof off, they rescheduled it for in town). When I arrived home last night, I found everything in order and Daddy had part of the painting started in SaraKay's bedroom. Hopefully tomorrow I can make a good start towards getting the walls done and then the closet.

Tuesday late afternoon Staff and Coco dropped in for a visit at Steve and Bonnie's. They were in the area for a funeral on the Wakefield side of the family and had read in the family letter about the move to Wellsville and decided to look up the address and drop in. It was a pleasant surprise and gave us a chance to catch up. Coco returned from her mission looking wonderful and so sweet and mature. She lent a hand with the children and we had a while to talk of her plans for the future.

Little Jared is a beautiful and contented baby. He just eats and sleeps. Bonnie's sciatic nerve problems have not diminished and yesterday she went into immediate care and had some x-rays taken. The doctor raised the question as to whether the problems might be a ruptured disk rather than the sciatic nerve. She is scheduled for an MRI on Tuesday. Her mother is able to be there with her for the next few days and if necessary, Becky and I may go next Tuesday to help out while she is involved with the tests. It is so discouraging for her to feel so incapacitated with her leg, especially since she is feeling good and is recovering nicely from the birth.

[Dad] Work has been full and demanding with getting camp decisions made, contracts out, scheduling and preparing for training sessions, and my endowment contacts. Last Thursday I went to camp by snow machine. I had arranged with the Fall River Power Co. to transport a load of lumber and materials by snow cat into camp for the kitchen remodel to help insure getting things done by the time Wood Badge needs the kitchen in June. The camp was beautiful covered with snow and looks a lot different with 4-5 feet of snow everywhere. It was fun cruising around the camp on snow machines.

Friday, Robert Fawcett, Dave Kirk, and I drove to Salt Lake and flew to the John Wayne Airport in Orange county, CA. All day Saturday we were in a seminar on training camp staffs. It was a wonderful seminar with lots of great ideas for staff training oriented around discovery of self,

courtesy, communication, and safe haven kinds of concepts. I hope to be able to share quite a few of the ideas with my staff during training this year.

It was interesting that one of the things that Michael Brandwein said at the seminar was that anyone working with children today needs to read the Harry Potter books. They are an integral part of the culture now. So, I started on the one that SaraKay had been given and got hooked! Part of the appeal for me is the English setting and characters. Speaking of which, I met a fellow at the hotel last Saturday morning from England. He is an engineer with Irwin Aerospace which designs and constructs parachutes of all types from those that slow down space shuttles to those used in HALO (High Altitude jump with Low Opening) drops. His office is close to Bletchley, one of the towns I worked in on my mission. He is also a Scouter and leads a troop of about 20 boys and girls.

February 28, 2000

[Mom] I received a phone call from Grandma Richards informing us that Deniece's Bradley is very ill in the hospital with pneumonia. He and Carolee have both been battling bad coughs for several weeks. After a short stay in the hospital Carolee was able to go home but Bradley hasn't been able to shake it and needs our faith and prayers. He doesn't seem to be responding to treatment although the doctors feel that he is stabilized and holding his own. Either Don or Deniece has been at the hospital day and night for the last week.

I went to Idaho Falls to pick up Rachel from her Grandma Benson's. She's been visiting for a few days following Jean's stay in Wellsville to alleviate some of the stress on Bonnie while Steve is traveling this week. Tomorrow Becky, Maddie, Rachel, and I are going to Wellsville to return Rachel, and see if we can help out while we are there. Bonnie was able to have the MRI last weekend before Steve left and it was a big relief to find out that she doesn't have a back injury as was previously suspected. She was given some medication that has relieved some of the pain in her leg. We are so grateful that she is doing better and that things are looking a little brighter.

While in Idaho Falls last night SaraKay and I spent an hour babysitting Maddie while Becky and Chet hosted a piano recital. We thoroughly

enjoyed the time together. Maddie is putting together words and phrases and it's fun to see what she comes up with. It doesn't seem possible that Becky is just a couple months away from her due date.

We also dropped in and spent some time with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They mentioned that AlvaLu's grandson entered the MTC one hour later than Scot and Jeanie's Jeremy. They saw each other as they were coming and going but didn't get a chance to visit. Christian is enrolled at a college close to home with plans to enroll at University of Utah next fall.

While in Idaho Falls last night, I also had opportunity to spend some time with a friend of mine, Linn Hansen (Daddy's boss's wife) who is struggling with cancer and is scheduled for a bone marrow transplant on March 7th. She was diagnosed in January and has been awaiting the results of blood tests on her siblings to see if there was a match.

Her sister from Washington was a good donor and will be in Salt Lake next week to start the procedure. It is a several months marathon including isolation, hospital stays, and a great deal of uncertainty. Her chances for survival are 50/50 with the transplant and zero without. She told me that she has had a lot of time lately to think about life and priorities and she has written letters to each of her children to be opened on various special occasions just in case she isn't alive to be present at weddings and other events. We had a wonderful visit and I came away grateful for the peace the gospel brings in the midst of sorrow and adversity. Linn commented that several years ago she participated in a 30-day survival trek which tested her meddle. She says she is going to call this blood transplant "Survival Trek 2000".

We received a phone call from Jonie last Saturday. She was with Nora in Phoenix for the funeral of her oldest brother, Carl. She wanted to visit Dave and Andrea and thought they were in Tempe, but when she found out they were in Tucson, she was unable to take the time to make the trip. She was traveling in Nora's car and just didn't feel she could impose.

[Dad] One of the main events of last week was a staff meeting on Friday for senior camp staff. It was quite successful and Sue said she was impressed with the caliber of help I had on staff. This coming Friday we have a meeting for the

whole staff and I hope we are able to get some good training segments in. I have a lot of ideas from the seminar I went to in California.

Sunday was a busy day with our meetings, home teaching, a ward conference visit, being home taught, and leaving for Boise with Brian Arave at 4:30. We had a good trip and were able to stay in a Plaza Suite for \$30 that usually rents for \$150. The seminar today was a good one and has caused me to do some rethinking about my approach to my job.

I'm grateful for my eternal companion as we contemplate celebrating our 34th anniversary this weekend. We have so much going on in our lives that I am not sure we are going to be able to celebrate until next week. What a joy it is to feel equally yoked together and pulling for the same eternal objectives. I have gotten hooked on Harry Potter. They are fascinating stories and it is fun to share them with SaraKay.

March 6, 2000

[Mom] The fellow who is going to lay the carpet in SaraKay's bedroom is supposed to come this morning so I didn't go walking today. I feel like I'm running a race against time trying to complete some of these projects before we get too far into spring and all the preparations for camp. I spent the better part of last Friday and Saturday clearing out the room and closet, painting, sorting and discarding, and piling everything, including closet doors, clothes, and even mattresses in our bedroom until we get the new carpet laid. SaraKay worked with me Saturday morning making all those tough decisions regarding her "treasures. Although this project has been a hassle, it's nice to go through things and clean.

This morning I am ready to have the carpet laid and put the room back together. Hopefully we can come up with some curtains and a bedspread that will compliment what we have done to this point. SaraKay asked the other day if we could decorate with a basketball motif and I was thinking how pretty something lacey would look. Looks like a compromise is ahead!

We had dinner at Becky and Chet's last night. They had also invited Curtis, Cristeen, Paul, and Tim. It was really fun to share the evening and get better acquainted. Having Curtis room with the boys has made it easier for them to see Cristeen on a regular basis. Curtis is engaged

and will be getting married on April 21st in the Bountiful Temple at 1:30.

Anyone wishing to attend needs to be there by 1:00. It sounds like they will have a reception in Green River, Wyoming and another later in Ohio. He and his wife will be living in Provo for the summer as will Cristeen, who will be attending the "Y" in the fall. He hopes to transfer to a college in Ohio following graduation from Ricks and eventually live in the Midwest. Bradley was released from the hospital last Saturday and is on the mend.

Daddy and I celebrated our 34th wedding anniversary on March 4th. It doesn't seem possible that we have been married for that long! We went to dinner and then rented a movie, "Howard's End". It was quite a bit like "Sense and Sensibility" and "Emma". I just love this type of movie but Daddy nearly fell asleep before it was over. He loves action movies but so many of them are R rated that it is hard to find one anymore. Saturday was filled with scout activities and receptions so we were glad we had taken time on Friday to celebrate.

As some of you may have already heard, Snake River won the state basketball championship last week. It was especially interesting to note that the last time they won state was in '85 when Stephani was a senior. We happened to be in Boise during the games that year because of an insurance convention and it was so fun to be a part of the festivities. I think they went to state the next year when Shauntel was a senior also and won consolation that year.

On Friday evening Snake River played a private Catholic school, Bishop Kelly, who we beat in the state football championship in November '99. The emotion between the two teams was intense and the game was won in an overtime because of a shot at the buzzer. The game on Saturday with Salmon was not as much of a contest, but winning the championship is always a thrill! Some of SaraKay's friends were going to Boise for the tournament and she tried to talk us into making the trip, but we are doing our best to keep her insulated a little from the high school scene for a few more years. She is the typical 9-year-old, going on 16!

Mike called last night and we went over his dental application process. He is also applying for an internship at INEEL and that has involved a lot of paperwork as well. He mentioned his trip

to Mexico and what a wonderful experience he had while working in the temple for the open house. He said that coming back to Provo and school was a letdown after having such a spiritual experience in the temple.

Steve Reader has been working on the cabinets for that temple for the last several months and he was privileged to also participate the week prior to the dedication, but in a different capacity. He was sent down to help with some last-minute problems they were having and he mentioned in his testimony yesterday how hectic and frenetic the pace was right up until the day of the dedication. He said that 1800 trees and shrubs were being brought in from El Paso in 40 trucks and that not one single truck was delayed at the border! His recounting of the experience closely paralleled Nate's stories of the Billings Temple and made me wonder if that is typical for most. Those of us on the outside looking in don't have any idea of the work and faith that goes into these projects.

[Dad] Last night we had a Larsen home evening at Rick and Terry's. Dad and Alva Lu were there, Gary and Linda and Ashlee, and us three. Terry had prepared a wonderful meal (as usual) that had us all groaning in ecstasy as we sat around and visited. Rick's family is getting so grown up. It's hard to believe that Jacob is a junior! Amanda and Aubrey are both such beautiful, unassuming girls that are definitely their mother's daughters. Jonathan reminds me of a little Rick as he curled around the piano, laying on the floor as we visited. The only difference is it seemed like Rick made a lot more noise.

We visited about a lot of things including: Dad and Alva Lu's visit to the Holy Land, Snake River winning the state BB championship, Jacob's two broken arms from snowboarding and Jonathan's broken arm from climbing over the couch—all within the last three months, Gary and Linda's visit to Boston including Garon's experience conducting a funeral for a black family, and Steve's telecommuting, and so on. It was a wonderful evening.

It is rewarding to see SaraKay's bedroom coming together. I can't believe how beat up it was as we got into it. It takes an incredible amount of painting, patching, cleaning and work to make a room look like new—but it does. We love each of you and pray for you often. The

mellowing maturity of age sharpens my appreciation for the joys of family relationships.

March 13, 2000

[Mom] I've had one of those "what have I done all day" days where I have nothing to show for my efforts. I enjoyed the family chat last night. Daddy is usually at the keyboard and SaraKay and I just watch the screen and laugh.

The bulk of my efforts last week went into finishing up SaraKay's bedroom. With help in the evenings from Daddy, we finished painting her dresser, bed, and the frame on a full-length mirror. She was so pleased to once again be able to sleep in her own room.

Last Tuesday SaraKay and I went to Susan Tripp's to see a 3/4 size violin that she was selling. We had assumed that it was used but it was brand new and very expensive. We brought it home but the more SaraKay played it, the more convinced we became that its tone was too bright. I consulted with a fellow in the area who refurbishes violins. After listening to it he agreed that the tone was bright to the point of being harsh. He said he could do some minor adjustments and perhaps alter the tone a little. I promised Susan that I would make a decision by Friday, but that day I was still in a quandary about what to do.

Earlier that day I followed a lead and called Paula Parks but she said she thought her violin was a 1/2 size. We had been praying all week that we would know what to do. About one that afternoon Paula called back and said that she checked and discovered that she did have the 3/4 size violin, much to her surprise, and that she would be happy to loan it to Sara Kay to use until she was big enough to fit a full size. Saturday night Ray Parks dropped off the violin and today I took it to Coleen and she tuned it, fixed the bridge, and gave me instructions as to what we needed to do. Cost: \$35.00 as opposed to \$400.

I have been so grateful for this small miracle and for Paula's willingness to loan it to us until we move into the full-size violin. I guess we're set for another year. It's interesting that some of the most dramatic answers to my prayers have been when I had needs regarding musical training for you children. I have concluded that the Lord loves music and will help us develop

our talents if we but implore for His help and then work like crazy to do our part.

Daddy had a busy week with his work, the annual mini-MTC on Saturday, a ward conference temple session on Thursday and our own ward conference on Sunday. Paul came home late Friday night to be one of the presenters at the MTC on Saturday morning. He and Kory Godfrey taught three sessions together. Following the dinner, I helped Paul finish up his laundry, get a haircut, and then drive him and Tim to Rexburg that afternoon. Tim spent Friday night at Becky's to keep her company in Chet's absence and we picked him up en route to Rexburg. It was early evening before we returned home to find Daddy working on our taxes. He'll be glad to have them done for another year!

This next Saturday we are going to Rexburg to attend a couple of events in the annual Women's Week. Deniece is flying in to spend the week with Curtis and Cristine and then returning to Salt Lake on Saturday to have some time with Grandpa and Grandma before flying back to Ohio. Curtis will install a new computer that Lisa and Don picked up for Grandma and that Kathy and Dick are bringing back with them from their trip to Phoenix on Tuesday. Hopefully we can get Grandma onto e-mail, and she can learn to do research on the internet. She is determined to learn to use it. I'm proud of her and all she has accomplished on getting over 1,000 names submitted for temple work.

[Dad] Sue mentioned several of the activities of my week. I would like to mention the temple session in conjunction with our ward conference. It was gratifying to have Dad and Alva Lu visit our chapel session representing the temple presidency. They each did a wonderful job in speaking to us and Dad seemed almost like his old self as he spoke so spontaneously and with such vigor. It is a real testimony to me to see how President Packer's blessing to Dad as he gave him the sealing powers is being fulfilled.

Every aspect of the mini-MTC was excellent except the attendance. Paul and Kory Godfrey led one session, Eric Dance and Isaac Wallace did another, President and Pat Shipley did the third. They all brought such a strong spirit with them into their class sessions! Our final speakers were President and Sister Karl and

Peggy Loveland. They did such a marvelous job that every one of us was ready to go on a mission!

One of my work days was spent developing a brochure to send out to all the Varsity Coaches and Venture Crew Advisors promoting the High Adventure week at Island Park Scout Camp. I used the idea of the ABC's of adventure and had activities for every letter of the alphabet.

Elder Dallin Oaks wrote in his book, "Seeking A Pure Heart," that "To become pure in heart—to achieve exaltation—we must alter our attitudes and priorities to a condition of spirituality, we must control our thoughts, we must reform our motives, and we must perfect our desires." He talks a great deal about the "inner man" and the "heart."

March 21, 2000

[Dad] Well, the ole' personnel shuffle for camp begins as I received a letter from my COPE Director that he is not going to be able to come to camp this year because of an ailing 90-year-old father in SLC. I am really sorry to lose him—I felt that the maturity at COPE was really a strength. I just need a few more CIT's—14 or 15-year-olds to come to camp for two or three weeks. We had a staff meeting last Friday night and had about 35 of the staff there. It was a great meeting and I am excited for the quality of the staff. It was fun to have Sue there and to be able to talk things through afterward.

Saturday, I had a meeting with all the support staff that are helping with the Millennial Jamboral at the fairgrounds. We are anticipating around 1,000 boys—Cubs through Ventures, as well as parents and Scout leaders. The Zinc brothers are coming to demonstrate their incredible yoyo skills. There will be fireworks, parades, competitions, booths, displays, patch trading, a Wood Badge reunion, Eagle Scout reunion, a wide game of trading Norman Rockwell collectible cards, and an antique car show.

After the meeting, we went to Rexburg to join Tim and Paul at some Women's Week activities. We went to the presentation of "Gloria" by Lex de Acevedo and then SaraKay and I went out to dinner while Sue went with Paul and Tim to the Mother/Son buffet and heard President and Sister Bednar speak.

SaraKay and I went to Taco Bell for our main course and then to Dairy Queen for peanut buster parfaits for dessert. We had the chance to meet a young lady that Paul has been dating—Danielle. From the family chat, she is the harpist and pianist talked about. A lovely, petite, and quiet young lady.

Paul heard last week that he is one of the recipients of the Spori Award which is a full tuition and fees scholarship for the next two years at the “Y”. His hard work has really payed off with scholarship support for his education.

Tim is getting his dental, physical, and other paperwork in order to get his mission call underway. He is also making preparations for leaving for Lancaster, CA for his summer job of selling pest control. He said the worst paid rep last year earned about \$6,000.

Sunday was my last ward conference for the year—the Moreland 1st Ward. We had the ward assign a Deacon, Teacher, and Priest to talk concerning balancing priorities. Then each of the Stake YM presidency spoke and we concluded with remarks from President VanOrden. I am grateful for my presidency and the inspiration they are to the young men.

My talk has been abbreviated and now focuses around a contest spinning three tops that I have a couple young men help me with. One top has a portion of it cut off, so it is out of balance. The second top is normal and spins just fine for its time. The third top is a special one with a small magnet inside and spins on a base with a small solenoid or something that keeps the top spinning. I then talk about the importance of keeping all the aspects of their lives in balance—physical, spiritual, mental, education, profession, family, etc. But more than balance, they can't be a power unto themselves, leaning on the arm of flesh. They must draw on an outside power, the Savior, to be able to keep going until we reach our eternal reward.

This week end I am going to fly to New Orleans for a National Society of Fund Raisers (NSFRE) seminar. When the meeting was in Texas three years ago, I stayed with Dave and Andrea.

[Mom] In a letter SaraKay received this week from Sam, he asked about our spring weather. In the last five days we have had every kind of weather from a blizzard that left six inches of snow to high winds and wind chill factor in single digits to sunny and warm. I felt badly that

most of the inclement weather hit during Women's Week at Ricks. There were hordes of mothers who descended on the campus and they really got a taste of just how miserable Rexburg winters can be.

On Friday I drove to Rexburg to spend a few hours with my sister, Deniece, as she was visiting both Christine and Curtis for the week. We chose to spend our time visiting rather than attend classes for that morning and it was a rare and sweet opportunity. We will have an opportunity to spend more time together on April 21-22 for Curtis' wedding and then Christine's graduation. I have invited their family to spend the night on the 21st with us since graduation is the next morning and they wouldn't have time to travel all the way from Salt Lake.

We are excited to attend Paul's graduation. As Daddy mentioned, Paul received word that he was awarded the Spori scholarship. It was fun to get to meet Danielle although attending a concert isn't exactly the best way to get acquainted with someone. She is a lovely girl and certainly accomplished. My impression was that she and Paul both are interested but not ready to jump into anything too heavy right now. That's fine. She lives in Sugar City and Paul will be home all summer so there will be opportunity to keep dating.

Tim is anxious to be through with the semester and try his hand at selling. He is coming home for spring break to prepare things for his departure on April 22nd from Twin Falls. I can sense his excitement and apprehension as the time nears. He is counting the days until the semester is over so he can move on to the next chapter of his life. We wish his departure date (April 22) and John and Laurel's (April 21) didn't preclude them from attending Curtis' wedding, Paul's graduation, and Jared's blessing, but we know they need to do what they must for summer employment. Every year about this time I feel the tension begin to grow as our family prepares for the upcoming summer and all the events and deadlines.

The week of graduation is going to be especially chaotic for Dad and me since that is the week of his endowment buffet and Silver Beaver Recognition Night. It is going to be complicated by the situation that has developed at our high school. After the tornado took the roof off the

auditorium, we had a heavy snowfall and the temporary covering over the building collapsed and all the melted snow ended up in the auditorium, damaging the seats and walls.

Since then, each time we had rain or snow, more damage was done and now it is going to take much more time and money to repair the damage than was originally needed. Our buffet had to be rescheduled for Rigby High School and that is going to make my job more difficult since I will need to transport everything for the buffet and work in a situation that I'm not familiar with. Daddy and I have gone over and over that day (April 22) trying to figure out exactly how it will come together.

We enjoyed the Sunday chat. I appreciated those who joined us even if it was for a short time due to other obligations. There truly is something magical about sitting here in our computer room and reaching out across the miles to talk to many of you. We heard from Jonie for the first time, learned a new pickup line from Randy, received information regarding Baby Herod's (Jared's) blessing date, were informed regarding the balmy weather in Tucson, chided Mike regarding his romances, and learned that the next time we see Laurel she will be sporting a new hairdo!

My Sunday afternoons have opened up a bit since we have choir at two and then usually have the balance of the day for other projects. One thing I have been working on is photo albums. It's a perpetual project but very satisfying. I have several things in mind including an editing and retyping of some of our past family letters. I have felt that those letters that were written before computers need to be spruced up. I hope that each of you are using your Sundays to good advantage. Some of you have such heavy responsibilities in your wards that it is probably all you can do to survive your Sundays but hopefully you are finding time to spend with your little ones, plan your upcoming week, and feel refreshed and renewed in your worship.

Friday night we dropped in to visit Becky and Chet. Becky has been spotting and went to the doctor yesterday. She is partially dilated and was cautioned to take it easy a few weeks longer until the baby matures. This turn of events has put her on edge and made me wonder how the arrival of this new little one is

going to fit into all that is planned for April. Chet's brother, Jake, is leaving on his mission in April and in conjunction with that their family is planning a family portrait session and a farewell. Becky has visions of delivering her baby somewhere between here and Salt Lake.

I received a long phone call from the woman who replaced me on the school board. She will often call to ask my opinion on issues before the board and each time she calls and unloads, I feel grateful for my decision to retire. This last year has been extremely controversial and I've been glad to not be in the middle of it.

March 27, 2000

[Mom] This morning I started this letter and got partially finished before leaving for SaraKay's piano lesson. When I got home about three, I finished up some other projects and was getting supper ready when the power went off. Ten minutes later it came on, but then went off and stayed off for nearly an hour and a half. My letter disappeared with the power and, try my best, I couldn't recover it. When Daddy called tonight from New Orleans, I mentioned it to him but he wasn't able to talk me through the process to recover the letter. Ever since the tornado, we have had numerous outages, and some have lasted for as long as three hours.

My thoughts have been with my sister, Deniece. She was in Rexburg just two weeks ago visiting Curtis and Christine for Women's Week. Before returning to Ohio she spent some time with Grandpa and Grandma Richards and during that stay she complained to Grandma about a sore spot above her stomach. Upon returning to Ohio she made a visit to the doctor and he suspected the gall bladder.

Thursday morning she had a painful attack; she went to the hospital and the next day she had surgery. What was supposed to be a routine surgery ended up being a three-and-one-half hour marathon. The surgeon discovered a tumor which had wrapped itself around the gall bladder, liver, pancreas, and was growing down into the bowels. He took a biopsy and the results should be back soon. They don't think that it is cancer, but they won't be certain until they get the lab reports. In the meantime, Deniece is home recovering from the surgery and we are all praying for her. If it isn't malignant, she might be able to wait until after Curtis's wedding before having another surgery,

but if it's cancer, immediate treatment is recommended. It's certainly an unexpected turn of events. Remember her in your prayers.

Daddy called tonight and reported that he had a good day and attended some enlightening sessions. Yesterday he had a difficult day because he was standing and walking nearly all day. Standing is always hard on him, especially since his spell with phlebitis. He was wearing his support stocking, but by evening, he was hurting.

Because he was going to be gone most of this week, he took off last Friday and spent the day working on projects around the yard. He began work on rebuilding the wood bin since the tornado ripped out the fence and support posts that were the eastern side of it, exposing all the timber and other paraphernalia that we stored in the bin. His project included replacing fence posts as well as pulling up other posts for use in rebuilding the fence we lost. He was exhausted by the time nightfall came and left at 5 a.m. Saturday morning for Salt Lake and his flight. I've hoped this trip would give him a chance to relax a little, but traveling, even if it involves some down time, is hardly the way to relax.

We are looking forward to conference this weekend. Paul will be in Utah and Tim home for interviews. We have wanted to get down to see John and Laurel before they leave for the summer but nearly every weekend in April is already booked. I purchased my scout uniforms the other day and Chet is going to loan me his scout shirt for the summer. Thank goodness Daddy gets a discount on everything he buys at the scout store. The pants retail at \$43.00 and the shirt at \$20. We have had to get some uniforms for SaraKay as well, although hers are not nearly as pricey.

April 4, 2000

[Mom] Several of you have called inquiring regarding Deniece. She called last Friday night with the good news that all seven biopsies came back negative. The doctors think that the tumor they discovered was caused by an injury she received several years ago in her abdominal area. When such an injury occurs, sometimes the body's defense will be to produce tissue that grows in the area of the injury to form a shield around the threatened organs. In Deniece's case, the tissue continued growing, forming a

tumor that eventually began to press upon her organs causing pain.

They are going to continue monitoring the situation. What a relief! Deniece said that her physician told them that when he found the tumor, he turned to the other doctor and inquired, "Do you want to be the one to break the news to this family that their mother has cancer?" We are all grateful that she has been spared. Often times when I face these kinds of situations, I can't help but think of the temple ceremony and the words that are said as we pass through the veil. The words remind me that we do have priesthood power to bless us and our families during our sojourn here on earth. It is one of the most comforting, beautiful, and thought-provoking phrases in the temple ceremony!

Last night we visited with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They are so busy in the temple that we weren't sure we would be able to catch up with them on Tuesday to wish Grandpa "Happy Birthday". We gave him the book "Standing for Something" by President Hinckley; the foreword by Mike Wallace. I'm sure many of you have heard of it since it has been widely publicized and is on the New York Times "Best Seller" list. Before giving it away, we read a few excerpts and the foreword and chapter titles and it whetted our appetites to read it. It seemed an appropriate gift for Grandpa Larsen who has always stood for righteousness. He has always espoused virtuous principles and we continue to draw from his example the strength and direction for our own lives.

Grandma Ilene is now the proud owner of a wonderful new computer complete with internet access and an e-mail address. Please add this to your directory and drop her a note. She goes to visit Grandpa each afternoon and takes with her any letters she receives and reads them to him. Paul dropped in at the rest home Saturday afternoon and visited with both Grandma and Grandpa who were listening to conference. It was a treat for all concerned.

Tim was home for the weekend and we put him to work helping us complete our wood box project. With the radio blaring, we worked as we listened to the two Saturday sessions and then he and Dad attended the Priesthood session together. When they returned and reviewed with me the talks given, I couldn't help but be

grateful for the direction the men of the church receive regarding relationships and righteous living.

It was especially sweet for us to have Tim here and feel his excitement regarding his upcoming mission. He listened to every conference session, took notes, and completed his interviews with both Bishop Jenks and President Shipley. He should have his call within two weeks. He would really like to go to the temple before leaving for California.

When he arrived home on Thursday he had a carload full of clothes and sundry items that he cleaned out of his college apartment. He is anxious to be on his way. He found out that the nature of his employment will qualify it to be considered an internship and he will receive three credit hours if he sends required reports to his business advisor on campus. He has met with his advisor and received a lot of encouragement for this venture.

We thrilled at the beautiful facility for General Conference, the glorious music, and the touching and powerful testimonies of the Brethren. I am in awe of the church and all that it encompasses. The talks were just what I needed and I was grateful for the inspiration of those who shared their insights and testimonies. What a time of rejoicing!

We hope to attend the temple dedication this Thursday via satellite. I need to get our white hankies washed and pressed. Aren't we fortunate to live in this marvelous day and age!

[Dad] It is always interesting to fly to faraway places and have a chance to learn and experience other cultures, cuisine, and so on-- but it is always good to come back to home and reality. The conference was an excellent one and I received some training and ideas that can be helpful. One presentation was about communication. In face-to-face communication, guess what percent of it is the words, voice (inflection, volume, pitch) and body language? Would you believe only 7% words, 38% voice, and 55% body language? That is incredible!

We had the opportunity in New Orleans to take the Haunted House tour and gained a greater appreciation for the history and culture of the French Quarter. That part of the town is so old and dirty with so much depravity that it is hard to go there without feeling the evil. It comes alive after dark and there are throngs of people

there eating and drinking and making merry. It almost seems like observing the large and spacious building of Lehi's dream up close.

We also went on a swamp tour on our last day. It was interesting to cruise around the bayous and canals and observe the wild life-- white egrets and alligators and to learn about that part of the history also. That part of the area is being developed with "cabins" and homes like around Jackson, Teton Valley, and Island Park.

Sue mentioned our work projects. It's always rewarding to see the improvements and how good things look. I really appreciated Tim's help on the wood box and fence repair. I couldn't have done it without him. We are no longer able to locate 3-hole split cedar posts to replace broken or rotted off ones, so we have to be pretty creative in using what we have. The wood box is now primarily composed of the picket fence that used to run 1/2 way along the head of the garden. Everything else has either been cut up and put in the wood box, or put in a burn pile. Things really look good! Also, we pulled out the two tall junipers that were on either side of the front steps and that really changed the looks of the front.

It was great to be able to have such a good long visit with Dad and Alva Lu on Sunday night. Before we gave the book to Dad, I had read just a little in it and would like to include part of a paragraph about Love that really applies to my feelings about you. "Love is the very essence of life. It is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet it is not found only at the end of the rainbow. Love is at the beginning also, and from it springs the beauty that arches across the sky on a stormy day. Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning of youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death. How rich are those who enjoy it in their associations with family, friends, and neighbors!" I am truly rich indeed!!! DAD

April 18, 2000

[Mom] I'm headed to SaraKay's lesson in a few minutes but thought I'd better use this time to my advantage since I don't know what this afternoon will bring. I've been living this way since last week when the doctor told Becky that she was dilated to a 5 and 75% effaced. That was a new term for me but apparently it means

that she could deliver any day. Since receiving that word, I have a plan A and plan B for each day. Today's plan A was to go visit teaching, do scout reception phoning, do the laundry, fix supper, go to music lessons, and buy Easter supplies. Plan B was to notify Jan that I couldn't go visiting teaching, have Coleen handle music lessons, run to Idaho Falls and get Maddie, and skip the trip to town. I have been doing this for several days and it's pretty nerve-wracking; there isn't much to do besides wait and hope.

We are trying to be patient. Becky was going to call the doctor this morning and complain about things but she said that she doubted she could get past a nurse or voice mail. I suggested that she leave a message on her doctor's voice mail that went something like this, "Doctor, this is Becky Seely and I'm considering suicide. Give me a call." I thought that might get his attention and a response, but who knows, maybe that is the way all his patients talk at this point in the pregnancy. Anyway, the minute we have news from here, you'll all hear about it. In the meantime, I am going by plan A today.

I enjoyed the family chat last night. We missed some of you but I know how hard it is to always be available at the right time every Sunday night. I heard from Mike later on and he mentioned that the dentist he is working with has suggested that he consider getting his training through the military. His first step is to get accepted to a dental school and then approach the military. I guess it gets pretty competitive. It will be nice to have Mike home this weekend and to have part of the summer to talk through his plans and options. He will graduate in December, take his DAT sometime in the next few months and spend this fall and next spring applying to various schools.

One he is looking at is Iowa, much to the Anderson's delight. They have an influential friend on the admittance committee they've referred Mike to and that might help his chances.

(Tuesday morning) Plan A for today is to clean house, finish calls for VIP reception, and cook and freeze food for company on Friday night. Don, Deniece, and family and Nate and Laurel are all coming to spend the night and then go to graduation the next morning. I also need to plan my Sunday music presentation, clean the

downstairs bathroom, change sheets, fix supper, and get things ready for Easter.

I had a headache yesterday and I laid in bed until almost midnight going over my weekend and hoping I hadn't forgotten anything.

Our trip last week to Utah was short but memorable. We were able to stop at the Crossroads Mall and get Daddy a much-needed suit. It has been a long time since he had a new one. We continued on and spent a couple hours with John and Laurel and Emma at Thanksgiving Point. It is quite a place complete with fish ponds, botanical gardens, a zoo, golf course, nursery (greenhouses), amazing gift shop, fine restaurants, and beautiful facilities. Next to it a dinosaur museum is being built which will be a wonderful addition to the complex.

John and Laurel are ready to be gone and looking forward to their summer. They are really pleased to be able to spend time with Shauntel and Randy, Becky and Barr (Laurel's sister and brother-in-law in Indianapolis) and then proceed on to Cincinnati. En route they are going to spend a night in Nauvoo. Although Laurel has been there several times, this will be a first for John and he is excited for that opportunity. It's wonderful to think that they are only a year away from completing their odyssey. We'll miss having them close, but can't think of a better place for them to be. John commented as we visited that he has so enjoyed his business classes that he is really hoping eventually to get into a situation where he can focus on his business training, even more so than his engineering.

We picked up my Dad and took him home so that we got a good visit with both Grandpa and Grandma that afternoon before leaving for home. Grandpa looked tired and shared with me an experience that he had had early that morning about four when his roommate soiled his bed and the nurses came in to help him. Cliff, the roommate, put up quite a fight and nearly broke the arm of one of the nurses who finally escaped to get help. A large male nurse then came in accompanied by another female nurse and they had to manhandle Cliff to accomplish their task. This was not done without considerable profane exchanges and yelling. All of this was happening just a curtain and few feet away from where Grandpa was trying to sleep.

By the time order was restored it had been nearly an hour and sleep had fled for Grandpa. After he shared the experience with me, I couldn't quit thinking about how upsetting that must have been for him and later I confided in Grandma that I wish she would request a transfer to another room for Grandpa so he wouldn't have to put up with that kind of incident. Later Grandma called me and said that she had visited at length with Grandpa regarding the incident and that he admitted it had been very traumatic but he felt that he wanted to stay in the room with Cliff since he knew that basically he was a good man, and that he needed and relied on Grandpa's friendship for support and encouragement. I continue to learn from my Dad. His example reiterates his oft taught lesson that my own comfort and desires should not always be the most important consideration in my decisions. Time and time again I have seen him put his own desires aside if he felt he could be of service or could further the Lord's work by his sacrifices.

Nate called the other night and we visited for quite a while. When I hung up and went to bed I lay thinking of how much I love and admire him for the fine person he is. Within the last month I have visited with all of my siblings. Although we have lived our adult years apart, my interaction with any of them brings strong feelings of love. I am amazed and sometimes puzzled at the strength of family ties that endure no matter the distance or differences. My parents and siblings grow dearer to me as life passes and I consider one of my greatest blessings to have been born into my sweet family. My love and appreciation for Daddy's family continue to grow with the passing years and my love for Allan and AlvaLu is a source of strength and comfort to me each day. I'm grateful for the gospel that seals us together and guarantees to us that these relationships can be eternal.

[Dad] I wanted to get my two bits in today. The family chat always seems to be pretty lively and fun. I'm sorry whenever I have to miss it. There were times last night when Sue was just about rolling on the floor, she was laughing so hard.

This last week was a busy one. One of the major events of the week was the Council Camp School on Saturday. This was for all the camp staffs of the council and there were about 250 there. It was a great success and most of the

classes were extremely well done. There was enough variety that Sue and SaraKay stayed all day and really enjoyed the training. SaraKay sure makes a cute scout in her uniform! So does Sue! I taught a workshop on communication and really enjoyed it. I had also done a lot of the work getting teachers for other classes and workshops and arranging for the facilities. It was gratifying to have it be such a success. We are getting ready for the Recognition Night this weekend and the VIP luncheon that we do for it. In addition, Curtis's wedding on Friday, getting Tim to Twin Falls for his ride to California for his summer job, Paul's graduation-convocation-Spori scholarship luncheon, etc. This week is going to be a zoo without even considering Becky and her condition.

Camp is coming together. I have a complete staff hired, many of the orders are in for supplies, and work is progressing on the kitchen remodel. I don't know if we are going to be able to pull things together financially to be able to afford the shower house construction this summer, but we are moving in that direction and I hope to have it completed and leave a legacy of flush toilets in camp.

April 26, 2000

[Mom] Becky delivered a baby boy, Tate Isaac Seely (7 lb. 8 oz., 20"), Wednesday afternoon about 4:30. Although Becky had gone into the hospital that morning to be induced, because she had tested positive for an infection during her examination, she needed two doses of penicillin administered four hours apart before the doctor would start labor. Another difficulty arose when she was given the epidural and started vomiting and developed a headache that lasted for nearly two days. She later commented that the delivery was a snap compared to the complications from the anesthesia. It was a welcome relief to receive the phone call Wednesday afternoon informing us that both mother and baby were doing fine.

Madison spent Wednesday here with me. Of course, when SaraKay got home from school Maddie was ecstatic! They played outside, jumped on the trampoline, and had a great time. That night we brought up a little cot from the storage room and fixed a bed for her next to SaraKay's and she went right to sleep when bedtime came. I had been worried that maybe she would have a rough night, but except for

one time when she awoke and climbed into bed with SaraKay, she got along great.

Thursday morning when SaraKay left on the bus, Maddie became pretty homesick and I was glad that Elmo and some other PBS shows gave her a little touch of home and kept her occupied until we were ready to leave for Idaho Falls. Chet took the balance of the week off from work and manned the home front, cooking, babysitting, cleaning, and playing nursemaid to Becky. When I called Friday morning about 9:30 he had already been to the hospital and gotten Becky and the baby.

Because of our hectic weekend, I wasn't able to help out until yesterday when Chet returned to work. It has worked out really well for me to drive to Idaho Falls each morning and return in the late afternoon. Becky is doing well and Maddie seems to be adjusting well to her new brother. We're grateful that another grandchild has safely arrived!

Thursday night we drove to Rexburg to deliver the Pontiac to Tim so he would have a way home on Friday and could prepare for his trip to California. When we arrived at their apartment complex, it was obvious that the semester was nearly over and everyone was celebrating. I commented to Tim that it was a real party outside and he calmly replied that it was like that every night! While Daddy took care of some camp business in Rexburg, I cut Tim's hair and we went over the final details of his summer's venture. He was "pumped" and ready to go!

Friday morning we left about 10 for Bountiful to attend Curtis's wedding. Paul came with Christine following their last finals and they were there for most of the day's festivities although they arrived too late to see the ceremony. It was very special to be in the temple with my family again, including Kathy and Dick, Grandma and Grandpa Richards, and Don and Deniece and family. Mike surprised us and brought a girlfriend, Becky Meese, to the day's events. He had met her the previous week and they had enjoyed each other's company so much that he had invited her to join us at the wedding and then he dropped her off at her home in Layton en route home to Idaho. It was fun to get better acquainted with her. She is a lovely girl who served a mission in the Philippines and is a senior at BYU, majoring in math education. Mike is beginning to wonder if he made a mistake

deciding to work in Idaho for the summer, but he received word that his internship at INEEL came through so I guess he is committed for the next few months to be here with us.

When we arrived home Friday night Tim was packed and waiting. He and Daddy left about 8 and they drove to Twin Falls where Tim's work supervisor met them. They left early the next morning for Lancaster, CA where their sales team will work for the summer. We received an e-mail Sunday night from Tim informing us that he had met some nice people at church and had been invited for dinner that afternoon.

Yesterday was his first day at work so we are anxiously awaiting word of how it is going.

Don and Deniece and family were a couple hours behind us coming home from Utah Friday night and arrived about 9:30. I had suspected they might be hungry and we had a late-night supper and visited until nearly midnight. It was so fun to have the cousins get a little better acquainted, too. By the time we got everyone bedded down and lights out it was nearly one o'clock. Steve arrived just a few minutes after we got things quieted down for the night.

Don's alarm went off at 4:45 since they had to get to Rexburg and move both Christine and Curtis out of their apartments before graduation at 9 a.m. We were all blurry-eyed as we got ready, had a bowl of cereal, and got on our way. Mike and SaraKay joined us for convocation at 11:30 and for the banquet at 1:00 where Paul was honored as a Spori scholarship winner. Paul got his picture taken with President Bednar and Elder Neal Maxwell, who was the speaker at commencement. It was a proud moment for all of us!

Following the banquet Daddy and I left for Rigby to host the VIP banquet for the Boy Scouts, SaraKay returned home with Angela Winder, and Paul and Mike finished moving Paul out of the apartment. They were supposed to join us and help us in Rigby with set-up for the reception, but it took them so long in Rexburg that we didn't see them until 5:30. Our reception was the best one yet and we were relieved and grateful to have it over for another year.

By the time we had set up, served about 150 people, and then cleaned up, I was ready to drop. We had arranged to drive the Pontiac home, leaving Dad to assist with the balance of

the evening's events. We headed home, Mike, Paul, and me crammed into the front seat. Mike and Paul had a wonderful tape of Mormon classics such as "Spirit of God", Faith in Every Footstep" and other great songs being performed by the Tabernacle choir and we sang along as we drove home. We stopped by to see "Baby Tate" for a few minutes since neither Paul nor Mike had seen him yet and then proceeded on home. It was a beautiful spring evening with the sky ablaze, high billowing clouds, and spacious fields stretching out for miles. It was a special time for me, flanked by my two sons, as I contemplated the events of the past several days and the Lord's goodness to us.

[Dad] Sue has given you a pretty detailed account of our weekend and last week's focus on Tate. It is a thrill to hold these little people that have so recently come from Heavenly Father. Tate would lie in my arms making little noises and would seem so helpless and yet such a sponge for love. You can't help feeling the divinity and innocence in a newborn.

It was so awe inspiring to be at the Bountiful Temple. The view from there of the valley is marvelous. The Bountiful Temple is so huge and yet so beautiful. Each temple has its own personality and yet you can feel much of the same closeness to heaven. Curtis has a lovely new wife and they received some excellent counsel from the sealer before he sealed them. One of the thoughts that I was particularly impressed with was the counsel that if he was going to be gone on a business trip or something that they coordinate that they will both kneel in prayer at a given time so that they can still have the sense of praying together at the end of each day.

It was a privilege to take Tim to Twin Falls. I was going to take a nap while he drove, but we just kept talking. It was a great time for us to reassure each other of our testimonies, to discuss his anticipations for California, to talk about his upcoming mission, and so on. Needless to say, the miles flew by and we were at the Twin Falls/Sun Valley exit before we knew it. On the way home I had to stop in Burley at Hub 66 to gas up. It brought back memories of when I worked for Olson Farms and traversed the state from Boise to Pocatello and Hub 66 was one of my main fuel stops.

At commencement the next day, I realized that we hadn't been to a Ricks College commencement since Sue graduated in 1966! Elder Maxwell did a wonderful job building on the theme of commencement and talked about the many commencements in our lives and the ultimate commencement when we embrace the Savior and he welcomes us into the Kingdom and we graduate to a whole new experience. It was appropriate to have Paul honored at the Spori luncheon. In the commencement program there were triple asterisks by the names of the Spori scholars and it seemed like he appeared plenty of times in the program. As I took the picture of him with Elder Maxwell, I couldn't help thinking about the picture of John with Elder Maxwell as they were both departing the Salt Lake Airport for the Orient.

I was truly grateful for Sue and her abilities when it comes to organizing and serving large groups. I was able to recruit some good help for her for the VIP luncheon, but she does such an excellent job of carrying off that event each year. It was fun for me to have Paul and Mike helping me with the name tags and being able to introduce them to many of my Scouting friends.

Easter Sunday was a good time for us as a family. The highlight was being able to watch the "Witnesses" movie that was shown between sessions of conference. I checked out the tape from the library and we watched it Sunday afternoon. What a moving expression of unified conviction and testimony with the world as a backdrop as each of the 15 modern prophets bore powerful apostolic testimony of the Savior and the Gospel.

Well, I had better close and get to bed. We just pulled up an email from Tim recounting some of the experiences of his first day on the job. Any one in sales can identify with the fatigue of rejection and trying to be up for the next door and being rebuffed again. He did get a sale which I think is quite remarkable for his first day. I know his work ethic will hold him in good stead with this adventure.

[Mom] Daddy left early this morning for Jackson Hole for the yearly staff planning conference. He will return late Tuesday.

I called Grandma Ilene last Thursday evening to visit and she was quite sick with the flu. She suspected that it was just a 24-hour bug and that she would be feeling better by Friday.

Saturday morning Kathy called and told me that she had admitted Grandma to the hospital Friday night.

Kathy went to see her after work Friday and she was still vomiting and unable to keep anything down. When she took her into the emergency room, they suspected she had some kind of a bowel obstruction and Saturday morning she had extensive x-rays. The upper part of the colon wasn't working and the doctors recommended that Grandma be put on a special diet to see if that would correct the problem. So far it hasn't helped. She is presently being fed by IV's and has tubes that are draining her stomach and intestines. The tubes down her throat are making it raw and she is unable to talk on the phone and she communicates only in whispers. She hasn't had anything to eat since last Thursday and so she is very weak.

Kathy and Dick have spent most of the week-end with Grandma and have also spent time in the rest home with Grandpa. Dick and Uncle Don gave her a blessing on Saturday and yesterday they took Grandpa to visit her. Although she is stabilized, if she can't hold down any food, she probably will be looking at extensive surgery. We are hoping and praying that that will not be the case. For now, she is in the St. Marks Hospital in Salt Lake. If you want to drop her a note, please mail it to her home address since Kathy will be leaving Thursday morning to attend Lane's graduation in Georgia. There is a strong chance that I will be leaving Wednesday to go be with Grandma during Kathy's absence. I know that Grandma would really appreciate everyone's faith and prayers. With the upcoming fast Sunday, I would like to suggest that we make her the object of our fast. We'll keep you posted as to her condition and call you if she takes a turn for the worse.

Yesterday was an enormous day for me as I had committed to teach a lesson in a combined Relief Society/Priesthood meeting on "Teaching Children to Work". It had taken a lot of thought and preparation and I didn't want to sound like I thought I had all the answers. I think what I said was well received and maybe gave parents some ideas of ways to include their children in projects around the yard and home. I had a lot of favorable comments from ward members so that usually is a good sign. I had done some preparation on Saturday to help Colleen Winder with her missionary farewell on Sunday, too, and

by the time I prepared for the Larsen family home evening and for the other, I was pretty cooked out. SaraKay was a great help to me throughout the day Saturday.

Yesterday we attended our meetings, then attended the Winder farewell in which Paul was singing with a group, and then came back to choir and finished things up for the get-together with the family. We had a young man who was a friend of Nathan Winder from Utah arrive on Friday night and stay with us since the Winder's were so crowded at their place and he left Sunday night following all the festivities.

Having our monthly home evenings with the Larsen side of the family has really helped us to feel more connected as a family. Linda, Emily, and Lisa are going to be going back to Boston for Garen's graduation the middle of May. They are really looking forward to the trip and the opportunity to see some of the sites as well as cheer Garen for this accomplishment. Garen will join his father-in-law's dental practice in Alpine, Utah and the family will be glad to have them closer to home. Ashley will be graduating in May and going to Utah State come fall.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen continue with their temple responsibilities. AlvaLu commented that when they have the early morning assignments, they get up about 3 a.m. to get to the temple and ready for the day by 5. She says that it is very exhausting to be up that early and that she sometimes feels like she can hardly keep going and then she looks at Grandpa and marvels that he is able to do what he does at his age! I'm sure the Lord is sustaining them both in their duties.

I spent the first part of last week with Becky. By Wednesday I could tell that she was feeling stronger and more able to take on the rigors of caring for things herself. Chet is such good support to her and really helps out when he is home from work each evening. His parents came last weekend and that was a treat for everyone. They have a beautiful little boy and Maddie seems to be making the transition fine.

Mike's romance with Becky Meese is continuing although it is frustrating to have the miles separate them. There is a chance that Mike will take me to Salt Lake this weekend and go to Provo to spend some time with Becky. He has been spending most of his days at the Snake River Library, studying for the DAT as well as

putting in hours on his data internet job. It has been quite a challenge for us to work out the internet\phone line usage time since Dad and I depend on the phone for much of our business and Mike's usage ties up the lines for hours at a time. He is trying to use the library as much as possible so that I am able to hear back and forth from Kathy re: Grandma and Dad is able to do his business from our home phone, too.

Paul is still employed by Gary and it looks like he will have work for the next few weeks until Gary finishes planting. Basic American is supposed to call regarding testing and INEEL should be making intern selections these next two weeks. We keep checking their web site to see if it's posted, but Paul's contact person said it would be into May before he would know.

Tim called Saturday night and we had a great visit with him. Although his first two days weren't very good, the team did much better later and far exceeded their goals. Tim was really excited about the prospects and about the fine guys he works with. He said each day and door is a new adventure and that he could write a book about humorous responses and situations he has encountered. I am encouraging him to record his experiences on e-mail and keep us posted as well as preserving this for his personal history. He has a sales meeting each morning from about 9:30 to 11 and then they sale door-to-door until about 8:30 each evening, six days a week.

This Sunday, May 7th, Steve and Bonnie will be blessing Jared and hosting a dinner afterward. We are planning to attend. We probably won't be leaving until Sunday morning since their meeting starts at 1:00. Mike, Paul, Dad and I and SaraKay will be representing our side of the family. We are so pleased to be able to share this special day with them!

Andrea called last night and said that they were leaving this morning at four for Disneyland. They were packed and ready and Laurel and Angela were so excited they could hardly stand it. They will visit Disneyland and the beach and other sites before returning the end of the week. One of David's co-workers loaned them some hi-tech walkie talkies to use during their trip, especially at Disneyland so they could be in constant contact.

We were pleased to know that John and Laurel arrived safe and sound in Cincinnati and are

now there with Laurel's family. John has his first day on the job today. He will be working with research on jet engines. We are pleased to know they have family a little closer.

May 9, 2000

[Mom] My day has been pretty hectic and tomorrow and Wednesday I will be substituting for Bishop Godfrey in seminary. I guess this is a trial run for me to see if I can do this sort of thing and keep my sanity.

Several months ago Bishop and Brenda Godfrey approached me about the possibility of applying to replace Brenda as the seminary secretary. Bishop had taken an administrative position in Salt Lake and would be leaving in June. No one was to know until the school year was nearly over so it was all very private and hush-hush. His assignment was for two years at which time he will take an early retirement and return to Moreland. They are keeping the home place and Kevin, who lives in a trailer across from Watsons will manage the acreage in their absence.

Several years ago they approached me about a similar position in Blackfoot but at the time I was too busy and turned down the opportunity, not suspecting that another similar opportunity would present itself in the future. When they visited with me about it this time, I talked it through with Daddy and we made it a matter of prayer. I didn't really know if it was what I was supposed to do or not. It would have been for five hours a day, five days a week, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. so I would have been home when Sara Kay was home after school and have summers, harvest and holidays off. Sounded pretty good although I couldn't imagine how I was going to find another 25 hours in my week. In order to apply I had to go through LDS Employment and have an interview with the Bishop to get his recommendation as well as be interviewed by Brother Balls the principal at the seminary. It was traumatic for me to say the least and the whole process left me intimidated and very aware of my inadequacies as far as qualifications.

Well, to make the story short, I was one of two finalists but didn't get the job. The whole process, aside from scaring me to death, did force me to evaluate my present situation and ask the question, "Even if I don't secure this position, should I be looking for some part-time work that would help us financially as we

approach retirement?" I guess the answer I came up with was that regular part-time work may be too demanding for me as yet, but that if I could substitute in the schools and set my own schedule, that it may be something that would be feasible. When Brother Balls called to inform me that the position had been filled, he ask if I would consider substituting and I agreed.

My trip to care for Mother was memorable. I left Thursday morning and drove to the care center and had lunch with Daddy. He told me that he would like to go home for the night so he and mother could be together on their anniversary. We drove to the hospital to get Mom but there had been a mix-up with the doctor and the hospital couldn't reach him to sign Mom out so I took Dad home to the condo, got him settled and then returned to the hospital to get Mom. She looked good and seemed in good spirits. We had a nice evening together and I tried to take care of things so she could regain her strength. She sent me to the grocery store for some things including a delicious lemon meringue pie that they were going to have for Friday dinner for their anniversary. On Friday afternoon I returned Daddy to the rest home. I could tell that he was tired but I think his time at home was special for all of us. I was able to help Mom with a few projects later that day and we had a wonderful visit Friday night. By Saturday morning I was ready to leave for home.

Christine, Curtis and Marie were scheduled to spend the evening and night with her and her brother, Don, was going to be there for Sunday and Sunday night. I called her this morning and she was doing fine and ready to fly solo. She truly had a miraculous recovery and hopefully with the new treatment that was prescribed, she won't have to go through that again.

When I arrived home Saturday afternoon, Dad and kids had the house neat and tidy, the wash folded and put away, and things ready for our trip to Logan. I really appreciated everyone's efforts to keep things clean in my absence. Sara Kay and I left about six for Logan and Daddy, Paul and Mike came Sunday morning following Dad's early morning meetings. I figured Steve and Bonnie might need an extra pair of hands Sunday morning to help get ready for the dinner they had planned following Jared's blessing. It was fun to have a little quiet time with them Saturday night and get reacquainted with Jared. He is certainly a charming baby and so

contented. He has doubled his birth weight and is quite a chunk.

Sunday was a time of rejoicing as we attended fast meeting in Wellsville and heard some beautiful testimonies as well as shared in seeing another grandchild blessed. Several families from Tooele joined in the day's activities and by the time the last guest left, it had been a full and rewarding day.

Mike left from Wellsville to make a quick trip to Provo to visit Becky. They were able to spend Sunday afternoon and evening as well as all day Monday together including a trip to the temple and a picnic in the canyon. Mike arrived home late last night and we spent the next hour quizzing him on his trip and impressions. He and Becky both seemed to have the same impression as they talked through their feelings- that for the time being they are going slow things down and give it time when fall comes and the distances aren't so prohibitive.

Paul is still awaiting word regarding the INEEL job. Last week we discovered that his resume had been misplaced and not included in the pool of potential interns. It was a disappointing situation since most of the appointments have already been made but the director assured us that she would see that it got sent over immediately to the departments that were doing the selecting and hopefully it isn't too late for him to be hired. The discouraging thing is that following selection it still takes a couple weeks to get clearance and so he still would have some waiting to do even if he was hired immediately. Gary is through needing him so he is anxious to get going with other work. Basic American is still not hiring so Paul is even considering going to live with Tim and work there since one of the fellows backed out at the last minute and left an opening.

[Dad] It seems like the intensity and pace of life has picked up just to have Paul and Mike home. And I know that our grocery bill has multiplied! It is fun to have them around, however, and to have their ready willingness for occasions of need. Last Friday, Mike went with me up to Island Park Scout Camp. We took an old canoe trailer that I had repaired a tire on so it was mobile and 6 kayaks, a bunch of carpet remnants, and other items up to the camp. We were able to drive right in to camp and the area was as beautiful and pristine as I have ever

seen it. We didn't stay long, because we were trying to hurry back to Idaho Falls so Mike could mow Becky's lawn before it rained again, but we didn't make it. We had a great visit as we traveled and I was able to introduce Mike to Big Judd's in Ashton, cheese curds (or crud's as he called them) and Reed's Dairy chocolate milk. It is nice to be able to have the opportunity to expand his world of experience in some of the finer things of life.

I was in Jackson Hole last week and had a great time. We had our annual staff retreat and training time. It was a well spent time with some good training and goal setting sessions, good food (such as Jedediah's), and good association together. We have a wonderful staff in this council and it is a joy to work with them.

Just about everyone I know has been asking about the future of Scouting and the current case before the Supreme Court and the implications of the LDS and other churches leaving the BSA if the ruling goes against us. My response is that we are very confident that the Supreme Court is going to rule in our favor. It was our desire to have this case heard at this time because we may never have a better composition of the court. If a justice were to die and Clinton appoint a successor before he leaves office—you can bet the nature of decisions from the Supreme Court would be more liberal.

For the last several weeks I have been reading BYU "Speeches". Last night I was touched by a story told by Kevin J. Worthen, a professor of law in the J. Reuben Clark Law School. He was talking about knowledge and charity and was making the point that "in order to make the knowledge we acquire more productive and to increase our charity, I suggest we look for ways to use the knowledge we have to help others and that we regularly do so without monetary remuneration. After making clear the need to develop charity, Nephi observes that if we 'labor for money[we] shall perish' (2 Nephi 26:31). This implies that we can never fully develop charity nor make our knowledge fully productive if we do things for others only when we expect monetary compensation in return." He then relates the following story involving his colleague Cole Durham and the lesson learned from Linds' grandfather, Lowell Bennion, who at the time was the director of the LDS institute of religion at the University of Utah. "When Cole

was growing up, his father suffered from multiple sclerosis. Cole's father was able to provide for his family because he was a lawyer, but there were still some things his physical limitations prevented him from doing. On one occasion, when Brother Bennion saw that the Durham house was in need of a new coat of paint, he offered to perform the task, knowing that Cole's father was physically unable to do so. After working long hours, Brother Bennion finished the job. As he was cleaning up, Cole's father asked him, 'How much do I owe you, Lowell?' 'You don't owe me anything,' came the reply. Cole's father protested, 'But we can afford to pay.' Brother Bennion kindly responded, 'But I couldn't afford to do it for money.' I suggest that all of us would do well to adopt that same principle—that we all commit to use the knowledge we acquire to help others, and that at times we do so without payment." What a great lesson! And what a great insight into the roots and heredity of Lindsay. How blessed we are by each of you in-laws and the heritage of goodness and spirituality you bring.

May 16, 2000

[Mom] The big news of the week was that Tim got his mission call to the Monterrey Mexico North mission with his departure date being August 9th. Before he left for California, he gave us instructions that when his call arrived that we were to open it after reaching him and read it to him over the phone, with a promise that we wouldn't tease him by reading it wrong or some other crazy stuff. When I arrived home Thursday night from Homemaking Meeting, Daddy and SaraKay were waiting for me with the big envelope in hand. We thought we would have to wait until Tim got home from work (11 pm our time) to be able to reach him but luckily, he had arrived home early because his co-workers thought his call might have arrived. Paul and Mike had been at Becky's using her computer to study for the DAT and arrived home just a few minutes after we opened the envelope. SaraKay ran to the front door and yelled out to them as they piled out of the car. I heard Mike give a loud whoop when he heard the word "Mexico!"

We just got home a while ago from a Chamber's concert; we thoroughly enjoyed the show. It was a production they took on tour last week. They presented it at several grade schools in Salt Lake as well as here in our own area and at a homeless shelter. The theme of the show was,

"Talk To The Animals" and each song was about some sort of animal. They combined the use of puppets, costumes, and other props to enhance the theme and the singers interacted with the children in the audience. What fun! It brought back memories of other years and I couldn't help feeling a little bit of nostalgia at realizing that this was the last performance for the seniors.

Some of you have asked about my experiences teaching seminary last Tuesday and Wednesday. It was intimidating but also very rewarding to relate to the students, call them by name, and teach them some wonderful gospel themes that were a part of the Book of Daniel. Two of the classes had some rowdy individuals in them and I had to establish early that I expected them to listen and be a part of the class. Once that was clear it seemed like we got along great. I've had some positive feedback from Bishop Godfrey as well as some of the parents of the students. I was exhausted by the time the day was over. I wonder how women do it when they have a full-time job outside the home and then come home to cook, clean, care for family, and hold a church job. I'm grateful that I have been able to focus my energies on home and family.

Mike attended an orientation today for his site job. He will catch the bus Monday-Thursday at 6 a.m. and return home about 6:30 p.m. each evening. These first few weeks will be pretty intense as he learns his job. Thank goodness he is through with the DAT and doesn't have that worry as he gets into his summer.

He and Paul and Jennessa (Paul's friend from Ricks) drove to Provo last Friday and spent the night with Ben and Kari Hammond. Saturday morning Mike studied in the library before taking the test at 2:30 in the Silvan Learning Center in Orem. He had been studying these past two weeks and taking sample tests from a computer disk and had consistently scored about 18-19. Although Paul had spent several hours tutoring him on inorganic chemistry, he was really worried about it and didn't feel very confident. Part way through last week he got sick with the stomach flu which further complicated things and so he had Daddy administer to him. His biggest concern was that if he didn't do well, he would have to take it again (\$160) and he didn't want to have that added expense.

When all was said and done, he scored in the 90+ percentile in every section except one in which he got in the 80 percentile and his composite was 21. Based on the BYU Dental committee's comments, he should be able to pick and choose which school he will attend with that DAT score and his 3.9 GPA. We are all grateful. He recounted to us several small miracles that occurred the day of the test which witnessed to him that the Lord was guiding him and supporting him in his efforts.

Paul received word that Basic is testing Thursday and hiring Friday so he is hoping to get on the payroll soon. Today was his first day without something pressing to do and he was restless and ready to move to California and work with Tim. He was reassured after calling Becky Bates, the personnel manager at Basic, that once the testing is completed, he could plan on a job, so I guess he is going to stick around and be patient a few more days. Between working for Gary and doing Mike's data job, he has had steady work until today.

Last Saturday Bonnie and Jared dropped in for a couple hours unexpectedly. She came to visit her sister, Shannon, who had just had a baby girl. It was fun to have a few minutes to visit one-on-one. SaraKay was with a friend and Daddy was still at the Jamboral.

We received word yesterday that since there are no weddings this summer, Dave and Andrea will make their summer trip home coincide with Tim's farewell. We were delighted with that news! We haven't heard from Steph and Linds regarding their summer plans but we are assuming that our Midwest branch of the family (Jonie, John, and Shaunte)) will not be able to come.

[Dad] Starting last Wednesday, my life has revolved around Jamboral. One of the main things I was responsible for was putting up banners and signs. I had signs to put up for Trading Posts, each of 18 Districts, First Aid, Information, Hosting, Garbage, and so on. In addition, I had a couple large 10' x 22' signs that I had to hang. It took some creative engineering. One of the big ones had to be mounted as a backdrop on the large stage for the grandstand arena area. With the winds we get at this time of the year, it was a challenge to put it up and know that it was secure.

We were really concerned for the weather when it was snowing on Thursday, but it cleared up and we had beautiful weather for Friday and Saturday. There were about 9,000 kids and 2-3,000 adults on the fairgrounds and lots of activities and fun for all. It was a great success, with great publicity and news coverage, but we will be lucky if we break even. I worked all day Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday setting up. Then, from 2:30 until about 8:30 Saturday night and all-day Monday cleaning up.

Today, I had the opportunity of taking a Rotary Group Study Exchange team of 5 people from Brazil around for the morning and then handing them off to people in American Falls. They were delightful and it was a positive experience to visit with them about Brazil, their professions, and their impressions of Idaho.

May 22, 2000

[Mom] I spent part of this morning on the phone visiting with Lisa regarding the Richards' reunion that was scheduled for July 6th, 7th, and 8th in Salt Lake. We knew early on that Dad and I couldn't participate because of our camp commitments but because of a variety of circumstances, Nate and Maureen's plans have been changed and they will be in Washington for an Alsop reunion instead of in Salt Lake.

Because of the time and expense of flying out for Curtis's wedding, Deniece's family is also unable to attend and so now Lisa is wondering if it's worth having it. She and Don have planned a trip to Washington for a Bricker reunion the end of June and then they are going to spend a few days with Charles and Brenda and Nate and Maureen and families at Charles' cabin before visiting Grandma and Grandpa and Kathy in Salt Lake so they will see most of the family even if the reunion isn't held. One thing they are still hoping to pull together is an evening cookout and birthday party for Grandpa on Friday, July 7th. If this happens, Mike and Paul are going to attend, Steve and Bonnie, maybe, and a slight chance that Steph and Linds and Lane and Leslie may be in Salt Lake around that time.

Daddy put in a big day Saturday spraying and rototilling. We want to have things in good shape so Mike and Paul can maintain it without too much time and effort. Just keeping the lawn mowed and trimmed gets to be quite a task let alone the other projects that vie for time.

We are looking forward to having Steve and Bonnie stay with us over the weekend in conjunction with Kimball's arrival home from his mission to France. School is out on Friday and we've planned a cookout and relaxing evening.

Last weekend we hosted Paul's friend, Jenessa. Justin Bradshaw got married and the group of high school friends spent the day in the temple and at the wedding dinner and reception. It was fun to have some of the group here in our home after several year's absence. They had a party here after the reception and they were still playing Pit and yelling and screaming downstairs when Daddy and I finally went to bed about 11 pm. Jenessa is a lovely Canadian girl who Paul met his freshman year at Ricks and who is good friends with Merritt Van Orden's wife, Mandy. They have hopes that Paul and Jenessa will hit it off and so they have lined them up on several occasions and they are going this weekend to the Playmill in West Yellowstone.

[Dad] Last Tuesday, I mentioned the Brazilian Group Study Exchange team from Rotary. I met them at 8:30 that morning and drove them to the office to give them a little insight into Scouting. Then we went to Pacific Recycling and had a personalized tour and were really impressed with the scope of that operation and the quantity of steel, aluminum, brass, etc. that they go through. Then we went to the Fort Hall museum which has displays with artifacts and explanations regarding the history of the area, and the tribal and reservation history. After that we went to the Fort Hall Replica and got insight into the lifestyle and conditions of the Indians, mountain men, and pioneers that helped settle the area. We then joined my Rotary club for lunch and the group presented a program informing us about their state in Brazil and the area around Salvador, the capital of Bahia.

Wednesday, I went to camp and had a great time with Verl Andrew and Elmo Dial as we toured the camp and looked at what needed to be done to be ready for campers. Verl took us to lunch at Big Jud's on our way home. Thursday night I went to Idaho Falls for a Wood Badge meeting. I am impressed with the quality of volunteers that get involved in that program.

Friday, we went back to camp and Mike and Paul did some painting for me while Elmo and I did some other tasks. Friday night I was asked to speak to the Moreland 4th Ward Father &

sons outing at Wadsworth Island. I thought it would be special to take my two sons with me. So Paul, Mike, and I sang a trio of "Joseph's First Prayer." I used that as a springboard to my talk about the examples of fathers to sons--e.g. Heavenly Father and Jesus, Joseph Smith Sr. and Jr., and Steve Young and his Dad.

Then I talked about the importance of being the kind of son that can be introduced by his father as "this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

Saturday was a full day of work around the yard; tilling, mowing, spraying. Things really look good! Sunday included a training session for a new ward YM presidency in Riverside 3, church and Priesthood meeting outside in the shelter in commemoration of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, and choir.

Well, that brings us up to date and Election Day today. We're pulling for DeV Vaughn Shipley and Cleone Jolley as commissioners and I was confronted with competition for my precinct committee-man spot. We'll see what happens.

May 29, 2000

[Mom] We've had a relaxing holiday. Last night as we scheduled our upcoming week, I announced that all of us were going to take a break today and not work. It has seemed like we haven't had a day off in months and we were due a vacation. My announcement met with some resistance since there are still projects in the yard that need attention, but with a little persuasion, I succeeded in convincing Daddy to kick back for a day. So, we slept in, had a late breakfast, went to a movie (Frequency), and finished the day at Chet and Becky's with a fun barbeque. Felt good!

Tomorrow morning Paul goes for orientation at Basic, Mike resumes his job at the INEEL, and Daddy is heading to camp again to do some repairs. He and Paul left Thursday afternoon, spent the night at Island Park, and returned home Friday afternoon after a successful work project painting the new kitchen in the lodge. They applied three coats of paint and prepared things for the cabinets to be installed. Daddy and the camp ranger, Elmo, have made a list of projects to be completed and I suspect that most of the manpower will be the two of them.

I received a phone call from Grandma on Thursday informing us that Grandpa Richards

was in the hospital. He had some chest pains a couple weeks ago and Uncle Charles told Grandma to get him into a cardiologist immediately. When he was examined it was discovered that his heart was beating at 35 beats a minute, about half its normal capacity. The doctor was amazed that Grandpa hadn't suffered a heart attack under those conditions and immediately scheduled him for surgery the next morning to have a pace maker inserted to keep his heart beating at a normal rate.

The procedure went well and he was released from the hospital on Saturday. When I called and visited with him yesterday, he commented that he has more energy than he has had for a long time.

Steve and Bonnie arrived late Thursday night after welcoming Kimball home from his mission to France. They spent Friday with us and we hosted a wiener roast that evening including Becky and Chet, and Jenessa (Paul's girlfriend). The day was so windy that we weren't able to start a fire outside but Daddy rigged up a small barbeque fire in the garage that served nicely and we roasted wieners, marshmallows and pretended that we were in the great out-of-doors. It made for a fun evening.

As some of you are aware, about six weeks ago I had a root canal on a tooth that had been troubling me for months. I called it my "Phantom" tooth because it was fine during the day but sometimes in the night, I would wake up with it hurting. This went on for several months and so the last time I had a dental checkup I mentioned it. Dr. Hatch suspected that the tooth was dying and scheduled me with a specialist in Idaho Falls.

In April I had a root canal and was put on medication to clear up the infection. For several weeks after the root canal I continued to have a nagging pain in my jaw and I called the specialist but he assured me that I needed to be patient and give the body time to heal. Finally, last week the pain had become definite enough that I scheduled another appointment with the doctor and he discovered that the infection had spread under the tooth. He gave me some stronger antibiotics and scheduled me for another procedure where he would open up the gum beneath the tooth and clean out the infected area. I was still mostly experiencing the "phantom" pain at night but by Thursday the

pain had become more constant. I felt like the side of my head was as big as a softball and that the pain was moving down my neck and into my ear. By Saturday afternoon I had about had it with the pain and called the doctor again and he ordered a stronger antibiotic, commenting that this one would give me a quicker response although it might upset my stomach. The "might" in that statement sent up a red flag for me since a weak stomach has long been my lot in life. I told him that before starting on the stronger antibiotic I would like to give the first antibiotic another day to work. He agreed. On Sunday morning before most of the household awoke, I had Daddy and Steve give me a blessing. Within a short while, I felt the pain begin to subside and for most of Sunday I was able to function without undue discomfort. Yesterday I didn't have to take any pain medication and today my jaw is starting to feel normal again. Hopefully I have dispelled the "Phantom" from my life.

On Sunday we made our annual trip to the cemetery to visit Grandma Larsen's grave. We were pleased to arrive just a short time after Dad and AlvaLu and so we got in a wonderful visit as well as decorating Grandma's grave. It is always a sweet experience to be at the cemetery and see the many families there and the beautiful flowers on the graves. We decorated Grandma Gooch's grave on Saturday.

SaraKay is out of school now for the summer and missing it already. At the awards assembly she received the "Presidential Fitness", the Honors Accelerated Reading award, Citizenship, Math, and Homework awards. She's hung them on her bedroom wall along with her basketball trophies and music awards. It's hard to believe that soon she will be ten. She has really enjoyed having the boys home for the summer and has taken every opportunity to challenge them to a game of basketball or HORSE.

[Dad] Sue told you about the painting marathon for Paul and me last Thursday and Friday. It was fun to work together and visit and have a good male bonding experience.

I met with the rep from Sysco with my cooks and commissary director and worked through most of the details for our first order. A couple of my staff members left last Friday for National Camp School at Peaceful Valley, south of Denver to get

the training and certification they need for their positions.

Last Tuesday night I was curious enough about the outcome of the election that I went in to McDonalds and picked Paul up about 10:30 and we went to the Courthouse to see what was going on. It was really interesting to be there on the spot as the returns were compiled precinct by precinct. We visited with some of the local officials and news people that were there as well as some of the candidates that were there to see the outcome, particularly in the Commissioner race. Cleone Jolley barely won over the incumbent Kay Gneiting from Shelley, but DeV Vaughn Shipley won handily over the other two men from Aberdeen. I was reelected to my precinct committeeman spot with 2/3 of the vote (actually getting more votes than any other precinct committeeperson in the county.) I have sent out the notices to all the relevant people for a meeting on Thursday night to organize the Legislative District and select delegates to the State Republican Convention.

June 6, 2000

[Mom] SaraKay stayed at the Winder's following her violin lesson, Daddy and Mike are at work, and Paul is downstairs asleep. Last week he had four 12-hour day shifts and this week he has three 7p.m. to 7a.m. shifts which means that he tries to sleep all day in order to survive the nights. So far he has done pretty well. He went down to bed about 8:30 a.m. yesterday and came up for supper at 4:45. I think he surprised himself at being able to sleep so long but we were grateful since those night shifts can be really miserable.

Mike's job requires that he catch the site bus Monday-Thursday at 6 a.m. and he arrives home at 6:30 p.m. The wonderful thing about his job is that he gets Friday-Sunday off. He has enjoyed having some time to go through his boxes and organize and discard. He and Paul are affiliating with the ISU ward in Pocatello for the summer and have had a few activities through that association.

Last Friday I spent part of the day with Becky helping her prepare for her upcoming Sunday dinner. We browned hamburger, mixed punch, made cookies and cakes and enjoyed visiting. SaraKay played with Maddie and Becky and I alternated feeding Tate while we cooked. Chet's family were arriving for the weekend on

Saturday and the rest of us (Steve and Bonnie and family, Mike, Paul and Janessa, Dad, SaraKay, and I) were all invited for dinner following Tate's blessing on Sunday. It was a wonderful time together. Chet gave Tate a beautiful blessing. I couldn't help thinking about all the sleepless nights since his birth six weeks ago and how exhausted Becky and Chet have been as they have alternated feedings, and done everything they could to catch some sleep despite his two-hour feeding schedule. Babies are so labor intensive!

It was a thrill to see so many in the circle and feel the strength and love of the families involved. Dot and Bruce are certainly wonderful people and so good to Becky. Chet had meticulously groomed his yard for the occasion and the weather was beautiful.

Friday afternoon SaraKay and I drove with Daddy to the Island Park scout camp for a work project. On Wednesday evening Daddy brought home six large boxes packed with supplies for the Trading Post and SaraKay and I spent several hours checking the price lists against what was in the boxes. It gave us a taste of what we would be doing at camp. I was pleasantly surprised at how capable and helpful SaraKay was.

Friday when we arrived at camp, we went to the Trading Post and surveyed the situation. We began arranging shelves, display cases, washing and cleaning things off and getting acquainted with things. Saturday we spent the entire time inventorying the storage room.

We cleaned the room, top to bottom, and counted every package, box, sack, rope, and cup. What a project! It really got us acquainted with what we would be selling and packaging and we felt a lot of satisfaction at seeing the room organized and ready for the new supplies. We will be going to camp the week of June 25th and have that entire week to set up the store, arrange displays, and get ready to open for business the following week. It is work that SaraKay and I can do together and an ideal project for us to share. She even found time to ride her bike around camp.

Tim received word that he received a full tuition scholarship to Ricks when he returns from his mission. We called him Sunday and asked him how many sales he made last week. When he told us we informed him that he could add 43 to

that number since his scholarship funds would equal 43 sales! He was pretty pumped and excited with that news! He will be arriving in Salt Lake on Friday, August 28th from Lancaster and will have the next week to get ready for the MTC. I already have him scheduled for all kinds of appointments for shots, shopping, and other business. He has submitted information for his passport and visa and gotten things underway with all of that.

I think Daddy felt good about what was accomplished by the staff on Friday and Saturday and except for the kitchen which is being remodeled, things look pretty good. One of the last important projects he is working on right now is to get some flushing toilets for the staff so we don't have to use the outdoor latrines all summer. That will be a wonderful improvement. He has certainly made some major improvements in the camp and I know that his boss is pleased with how things are progressing. The next few weeks are going to be important ones as we prepare to vacate.

We arrived home Saturday evening about six to find the lawn mowed and trimmed and things looking very nice. Mike had worked long and hard to have both yard and house neat as a pin. I was worn out and the sight of our place looking so spiffy was a welcome one! We appreciated his sensitivity to our situation. We have so enjoyed having him and Paul home this summer. Paul is continuing his relationship with Janessa Brown and they find time each week to be together. She is a lovely girl and she and Paul seem to think a lot of each other. It was fun to have her join us for the blessing on Sunday.

Sunday evening we had the Larsen FHE at Rick and Terry's place. Grandpa and Grandma weren't able to be there since they were in Utah for a great grandchild's blessing on AlvaLu's side of the family. Gary and Linda filled us in on news of Lisa's engagement to a Hansen boy from Pingree. They will be married on August 4th in the Idaho Falls Temple at 7:30 am with a reception that evening. We informed everyone regarding Tim's plans and invited them to our home following the farewell for dinner on July 30th. We received an e-mail from Staff informing us that Jimmy is home and will be having his report on June 11th in Las Vegas. He met a girl while on his mission and they may be getting married in the near future. Christian Gentry is enrolled at University of Utah in their

music and composition program and he is coming on Friday to spend the weekend with us. He and Paul and Mike have dates lined up for the weekend so that should be fun.

We enjoyed Laurel's letter and update on their situation. She is just five weeks away from her due date and we continue to pray for her wellbeing.

[Dad] It was really satisfying to have part of the staff there and working hard to improve the appearance of the camp last weekend. I was also pleased with how the cooks stepped up to the plate with feeding us breakfast and lunch and cleaning things up enough in the lodge so we could all eat together. I am trying to get the districts with assignments to come forward and get them accomplished also. It takes a lot of follow-through to make things happen.

Last week I was reelected to my Legislative District Chairman job and also selected as a delegate to the state Republican convention to be held the third weekend of July. That is going to be a little difficult with the Wood Badge involvement I have that same time. But, I would like to hear Charleton Heston's talk on Saturday.

June 14, 2000

[Mom] June has stretched on forever but I know it's just because each day is "numbered" and I feel like I have lived it several times over with all the plans and arrangements. Daddy leaves this Friday for two days and comes home for Father's Day and then leaves again on Sunday evening about four to return for the week. If you want to call him for Father's Day, please do it before Sunday night since he won't be available. I know he would love hearing from each of you. We are planning on hosting dinner on Sunday for Grandpa and Grandma Larsen at 3:00 before Dad leaves.

Last week we had a visit from Maren and Brock when they dropped Christian off for the weekend. They were spending the weekend with Brock's family and had invited Christian to come along to visit us. We were delighted to see all three of them. Maren is expecting a baby in October. She and Brock are both in their final year of undergraduate studies and then Brock is planning on applying to graduate school somewhere.

Christian recently moved to Salt Lake and is looking for work. His schooling at the U starts

this fall. He has grown into a fine young man and it was a joy to have him here with us for a few days. He and Paul lined up dates for Saturday night and spent part of Saturday preparing things for that. Saturday morning Mike, Paul, and Christian attended the 9 o'clock temple session and then went to lunch in the cafeteria with Grandpa Larsen. It was the first time Christian had seen him since returning from his mission. Mike related to us that following lunch they walked Grandpa up to his office and the four of them joined in a big group hug. It was a poignant moment for them all.

Sunday we had regional conference at the mini-dome in Pocatello. Mike and Paul were speaking in their ISU ward and we had mixed emotions about where we should attend but we felt like we should be to the conference. On our trip to Pocatello, just prior to the Chubbuck exit, we ran into a major traffic jam. I worried that Mike and Paul, who preceded us by about ten minutes, would be late for their meeting. After they returned from their morning meetings, they related to us that they, too, had been caught in the jam and arrived for sacrament meeting late. They said it made for a pretty dramatic entrance.

For our scripture time last night we had them give us their speeches and Daddy rehearsed the information he received at the Saturday afternoon leadership conference with President Monson and Elder Oakes.

June 21, 2000

[Mom] It was satisfying to hear from all of you for Father's Day. Thanks for persisting until you reached Daddy. He gets pretty hard to catch up with this time of year. I know it meant a lot to him, and since I took most of the calls initially, I got in on some nice conversations as well. John was the first to call yesterday morning at 6:30 (8:30 Ohio time) before they left for their meetings and Jonie called about 10 p.m. so the day was pretty full. Hopefully all of you who celebrated birthdays had memorable times as well. I recently told Mike and Paul that neither of them could marry girls who were born in June since we presently have three Father's Day gifts, a multitude of wedding gifts, and nine family birthday gifts to buy in June. I'm sure they will take that into consideration as they hunt for their "one and only"!

We hosted dinner yesterday for Grandpa and Grandma Larsen and Becky and Chet. Everyone brought food for the meal so my task was relatively simple. The tricky part of Sunday dinner is figuring out what to do and when before and after all the day's meetings, but things worked out well and we were able to fit in dinner and a nice visit before Daddy took off for camp. Grandpa and Alva Lu were on their own busy schedule as they came for dinner at three, and left at four to participate with Alva Lu's grandson's ordination.

It was a double celebration since Maddie was celebrating her second birthday. Becky and Chet arrived with birthday cake, candles, food for the meal, gifts for the birthday girl, and, oh yes, Tate. (Remember the days when you just walked out to the car, unencumbered, and went somewhere!) Anyway, by the time we had celebrated Father's Day for Daddy, Grandpa, and Chet and then sung "Happy Birthday", unwrapped presents, and blown out the candles, we felt like we had done it all. During the meal Maddie was so excited about opening her gifts that she could hardly sit still to eat and Tate decided that he was ready for another feeding, so Becky and Chet were up and down from the table so many times that it was like musical chairs. It put me in mind of days gone by and other meals when the term "fine dining" was a stretch. Tate has had such a time with colic this past month that rarely will he settle for more than an hour at a time both day and night and Becky and Chet are having their mettle tested as they wait out the time until he can handle his milk. I'm sure most of you can identify with this "new baby marathon" that you run in the first few months and are grateful when things settle down and you feel like you can get a decent night's sleep.

Daddy thinks we have taken a step backward this summer with Mike and Paul home as far as a good night's sleep goes. They are coming and going at all hours, whether with dating, work schedules, or other pursuits and it gets to be a challenge. We have thoroughly enjoyed having them around, though, and we spend a lot of time just visiting and laughing at their jokes. SaraKay has especially enjoyed the association and can usually convince one of them to play basketball, jump on the trampoline, or play a word game with her. Paul is keeping the road hot between here and Rexburg with his Janessa

"connection" and Mike has finally seen a couple of girls that he is excited to pursue.

Several months ago the five Blackfoot stakes made a decision to participate in a regional dance festival for all the youth. The idea was hatched when Caryn Esplin, our stake YW president, attended a seminar in Salt Lake, was shown the idea, and returned to sell the idea to the local church leaders. As a result of her excitement, the five stakes bought the idea and committees were formed to use the festival not only as a vehicle to promote dancing but as the basis of a summer five-stake youth conference. It had been nearly 15 years since the area had the last dance festival.

Daddy's involvement as stake YM president was not as intense as Caryn's but never-the-less, he spent a lot of time in meetings working through logistics and making assignments. The ward dance directors taught the dances after mutual on Tuesday nights so the youth wouldn't have an additional night out each week for rehearsals and the youth learned all the dances except for an all-girls Charleston number and a "newsy" boys dance.

As in any new venture, there were a lot of nay-sayers and critics as preparations continued and it was difficult at times to carry on when so many of the ward leaders were not fully behind the idea. Never-the-less, progress on the festival continued and last Saturday night was the performance, following two days of rehearsals, dinners, and firesides by all the participants and their leaders, stake presidency members, and even a General Board member from Salt Lake. There were two performances: 3:30 Saturday afternoon as well as at 8:45 that evening. The weather was absolutely gorgeous, there were standing-room-only crowds, and the participants were all excited and in fine form. The theme was around the last century's national events as told through dance and the narrators even included interesting trivia regarding Blackfoot's historical happenings. We saw the kids dance waltzes, the Charleston, jitterbug, disco and other popular dances. Besides the 1,000 youth who danced in every main number, there were specialty numbers that involved smaller groups. The finale involved small children dancing to a number depicting their role in the coming century. As the final number was performed, the Lord added his own magnificent touch to the evening as a full moon broke through the clouds

during the final song and shone brightly over the 50-yard line. An impressive fireworks display lit up the night sky during the final song. What a wonderful experience for all of us and for the youth who stepped out of their comfort zone!

I need to mention also that Sunday SaraKay and Angela Winder performed "Love At Home" in the Moreland Second Ward. Usually I am the one to accompany SaraKay on these assignments but because of the dinner preparations, Daddy went with her. When he arrived home he expressed how satisfying it was to be able to share in the experience with her. An added treat was to be able to visit our old ward and greet many of our dear friends from years past.

This morning I got up early and called Grandpa Richards. My day had been too busy yesterday but I didn't want to miss the chance to wish my own father well. Grandpa was up and ready to face the day and we had a delightful visit. He is doing well and had enjoyed spending part of yesterday at Kathy's celebrating the day with their family and Grandma. I continue to appreciate my father's influence in my life and count it a great blessing to have two magnificent patriarchs as fathers.

July 4, 2000

[Dad] We got home from camp last Saturday at about noon and had a little time to recuperate and get laundry done. Then we headed up to Idaho Falls to join Becky, Chet, Madison, Tate, Mike, Paul, Janessa, Steph, Linds, Katie, Sam, and Josh for dinner. It was a great time! Then all but the first four came back to Moreland for the night and church the next day. Late afternoon, we were joined by Steve, Bonnie, and kids. Monday was another party day with all of us here—doing crafts, cooking, eating, visiting, swimming, etc. We didn't get a game of volleyball in, much to Paul and Mike's dismay. I cooked Dutch oven potatoes and chicken for dinner and had a battle getting enough heat to get them cooked because of the cold wind blowing. Also, I worked on walking sticks with a power sander, that I had collected over the last few years and ended up with 43 sticks to take to sell in the trading post.

Steve and Bonnie and family left after dinner and then last night Lindsay set off some fireworks that he bought at the stand in Riverside. This morning I drove to Pingree to bugle for their flag ceremony. It was a terribly

cold and windy morning. Quentin Murdock talked and told of some of his experiences in Africa, Sicily, and Omaha beach during the war and also his recent visit back to the cemetery for some 9,700 Americans killed in that offensive. He recounted how many had been killed in each war since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and it added up to over 2,600,000 lives lost (young men) to preserve the freedoms of this great country. He spoke with a great deal of emotion and I was grateful to share in that experience.

Last week was a great week with the staff as we trained, worked, and made all the necessary preparations. The camp looks great, but things are getting pretty dry and I am concerned about fire danger. I have forged ahead with the decision to improve and upgrade the COPE course to bring it into line with current safety standards and so we had to replace another pole at the end of the zip line and put in a bunch of new guy wires and cables. We are also moving ahead with the rest rooms for the staff area and they are being built as we speak at Bert Dial's shop in Rigby and will be moved up to camp shortly.

It has really been a lot of fun having SaraKay and Sue at camp with me. We have a real cozy setup in the first Goldilocks cabin and have been delighted with the way things are working out. Kim Hansen and Robert Fawcett came up for one of the training sessions and were very pleased with what they saw in camp. They also commented that the Trading Post had never looked better.

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's recounting our busy weekend with family. It was very hectic and harried but so much fun to be together. It is interesting to see the relationships form as the grandchildren get a little older. Nathan became fast friends with Sam and Josh and SaraKay and Katie really hit it off, too. We spent Monday morning with the CD blaring and most of us adults in the kitchen area making pies, salads, and preparing for the night's cookout. It seemed like old times and felt good to have the interaction as we worked together. There were also the quiet evening visits and reflections. I relish those times together. I keep thinking about the composition of this bunch and how in a few years we will have changes that will bring different ones of you together, but hopefully the

same camaraderie will exist and it will be a source of strength and joy.

My thoughts have been with Tim lately because of the nearness of his departure. He's doing fairly well despite some overwhelming odds and certainly learning a lot about keeping his positive attitude despite the rejection and discouraging times. I told him that the three credit hours he is earning will be the most difficult ones of his college career! We love him and are counting the days until he returns home for his 10 day stay before leaving for the MTC.

Mike and Paul are doing their best to keep the house and yard spiffy. Paul has suffered another setback with being laid off for the next two weeks at Basic. They laid off 60 casuals and he was one of them. He still will have adequate funds for school but he hates being unemployed and is going to do some phoning to see if any farmers in the area could use him for a few days. He is making a trip to Canada with Janessa next weekend so his layoff came at the right time for him.

Mike has been battling a sore throat and cold and was grateful for the day off to sleep. He and Paul are enjoying their time together this summer and continue to give service in the ISU ward. They seem to be the resident musicians and are having weekly opportunities to accompany, sing, and perform at baptisms and sacrament meetings. The trip to Pocatello gets a little old for them but they have made a lot of good friends.

David spent the better part of last week in England and I'm hoping to hear how he got along. We are so excited to have David and Andrea here with us for a few days in August. I am making plans to include Andrea and her flute in the farewell program. Tim flies in the afternoon of the 28th. Steve has agreed to pick him up and take him to Logan where Mike will pick him up and bring him home. It is going to be a busy but wonderful time!

SaraKay and I had a wonderful time at camp. We worked long hours to get the Trading Post all stocked and ready to go. We opened for business on Thursday and got a feel for being retailers. SaraKay is wonderful help and can manage most of the tasks required of us. I am reserving operating the cash register for myself but SaraKay does a wonderful job of retrieving candy from the display cases and other items

for the scouts. They are all being so nice to both of us and it's been fun to make new friends and feel like we are doing a good job for Daddy. It is satisfying to see the love and respect the staff have for "Steve". He and his ranger, Elmo, have really worked to get the camp in tip top shape and Dad's boss is free with his praise. Daddy's days are long and exhausting and most nights SaraKay and I "hit the sack" before Dad is finished with his work, but it's been nice to share in this experience and enjoy the beautiful camp and activities.

The biggest "down side" of my camp experience is not being available for my folks. I tried to call Grandma as often as I could and she told me that Grandpa Richards is doing very well, despite the doctor's warning to her that sometimes a major surgery like the one grandpa had will be such a serious setback that a person may never regain their previous good health. Grandpa is pretty tough and he is now walking with assistance to the bathroom and having therapy each day to strengthen his arm. This weekend Lisa and Don will be there with Grandma.

The highlight of my stay at camp was a surprise visit from Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. They were staying at Island Park for a few days in their fifth wheeler and dropped in to visit. We introduced them around and they stayed for lunch. They are enjoying their short vacation from the temple and were going to be joined by some of Alva Lu's siblings.

July 16, 2000

[Dad] Our first real week of Boy Scouts is over and with great success. We had a full camp with 301 campers and lots of fun and activities for all to enjoy. The evaluations we received yesterday as the troops checked out were very positive as a whole and especially strong praise for our commissioners, troop friends, and the trading post. It is gratifying to have worked so hard and to have it appreciated. I am so grateful for the strong, mature staff we have and their willingness to work hard and serve. We had a couple of record-breaking days in the trading post and I have no doubt that Sue and SaraKay had a lot to do with that. It is incredible to me, the number of boys that showed interest in SaraKay and wanted to know how old she was and gave her a phone number or email address.

In addition to all the rest of the week's activities, on Wednesday the visitation team (or inspection team) from Area II came to check out our compliance with all the National Standards (about 160 of them including the COPE course). The team included Cecil Fawcett as team leader, John Whetten-- former Scout professional, Kim Hansen, Robert Fawcett, Brian Murray--judge and volunteer over camping in the council, and Steve Nelson. We came through with flying colors with one of the shortest reviews ever and were presented the pennant for being a BSA accredited camp at lunch.

I feel like we run a wonderful program and really bend over backwards to please our customers and meet their needs. It is always rewarding to have Scoutmasters or other leaders in camp that I know who are free with their praise for the camp.

We had a special fireside for our staff last Sunday with Elder Harold Hillam. He arrived Saturday night and stayed in his camper until Monday morning. He gave a great talk to the staff about signposts and then we went on a special plew (honor) trail for the staff and had a reflection and sort of testimony meeting on top of honor hill. All the staff and Elder Hillam sang "Happy Birthday" to SaraKay. That was probably the biggest group of boys she will ever have sing to her.

Sue and I have been talking through the next few weeks until we get Tim in the MTC. But, we are excited for the prospects of getting together as a family and being able to have some quality time with Tim before he leaves. We sure enjoyed the brief time we had with Shaunnie and Camille and wish we could have seen them again before they left for home yesterday.

[Mom] We're gathering together things to return to camp but I wanted to add a few words to Daddy's account of camp. It has been an interesting and satisfying experience for Sara Kay and I to be retailers and to meet so many new people and see so many new things. Daddy does an excellent job as director and I've enjoyed being a part of his "world" this summer. I come home on Saturday tired but we all work together to get the laundry done and get through our responsibilities on Sunday.

Mike and Becky drove Shauntel to Logan on Friday night and Steve delivered her to Ogden

the next morning to catch her ride to Iowa. Hopefully they are nearly home by now and have survived the arduous journey for another time.

Paul is in Calgary with Janessa and family until tomorrow. As it turned out, Basic called him to work for a few days last week before he left for Canada so he was grateful to get his hours.

We are awaiting with anticipation Tim's arrival home from California. The 29th will be spent getting the house ready for company and the meal on Sunday. The farewell will be on the 30th at 9:00 am. I am planning on staying home for a couple days after that so that we can get his mission shopping done and other details taken care of. We plan to take him through the five o'clock session the evening of August 3rd for his own endowment. We would love to have anyone who can join us. We plan to attend Lisa's wedding the next morning on August 4th at 7:30. Daddy, and I will then go back up to camp and Mike, Paul and Tim will join in the festivities for the rest of the day.

I made a short call to John and Laurel today and they said they were getting along great with the newest member of the family. They were just sitting down to dinner when I called so I am going to catch them later this week.

Grandpa Arch continues to improve. He has a therapy session each day and is getting the use of his arm back. I marvel at Grandma's resilience and ability to cope with all the ups and downs of aging. She somehow manages to spend several hours a day at the center with Grandpa and still find time for her other responsibilities. I attended a bridal shower for Lisa yesterday and was able to have a quick but rewarding visit with Linda, Mindy, Emily, and Lisa.

Dave and Andrea are job hunting in an attempt to get a little closer to home. Of course, we are thrilled with the prospect of having them closer but I am trying to not get too excited until they make their decision. We are hoping they will be able to be here for Tim's farewell but much depends on the situation with interviews.

August 7, 2000

[Mom] Daddy left yesterday for camp but Sara Kay and I stayed behind to take care of final details regarding Tim's entering the MTC on Wednesday. It doesn't seem possible that we

are at this moment in time. The summer has flown by and our time at camp is nearly over.

The last two weeks at camp have been easier than the first two. The number of troops was down significantly and so we were not so busy in the Trading Post. It has been a challenge to estimate inventory needs and plan for the remainder of the summer. Although our work load has been lighter, the record-setting temperatures have been a problem. Our store has a large fan and a window that we keep open but we still feel like we are roasting when the temperatures reach into the 90's. Thank goodness things cool off in the evening. We are usually finished up about 9 p.m. and can have a little while to relax. I have enjoyed spending the time with Daddy and SaraKay has enjoyed her interaction with the other staff members.

The last couple of weeks with preparations for Tim's farewell and departure, I have been grateful that Daddy has arranged things so I could come home early to get things ready.

David and Andrea were able to arrange their travel plans to pick up Tim at the Salt Lake Airport on Friday, July 28th. SaraKay and I caught a ride home from camp on Thursday evening and so we had a chance to get some things done before everyone arrived on Friday. David and Andrea and children were a delight to have here. They are expecting a baby in February and Andrea has gotten along pretty well so far with her pregnancy. Joseph was the one that had changed the most. He is a rough and tumble little boy and able to hold his own against his sisters. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get reacquainted with their sweet family. They were so good to help us get things ready.

We also had Curtis, Marie, Christine, and her fiancé, Brian, here on Saturday night. They will be married on the sixteenth of this month in the Toronto Canada temple. Christine dated Brian in high school and when he returned from his mission, things clicked for them.

Steve arrived Sunday morning with Rachel, Nathan, and Chrissie. Bonnie stayed behind with Jared, who had a reaction to some medication and wasn't feeling well. On Saturday Rachel had taken a fall from her bike and landed face first on the pavement in front of their house. She arrived at the farewell bruised and scraped up but never-the-less, she made it and we

appreciated her support. Hopefully by now she is feeling better. Becky and Chet joined us as well as Karen and her three children from Layton, Rick and Terry and family, Grandpa and Grandma Larsen, and Gary, Ashley, and Lisa. I invited the Hannis and Ellis' to join us later for dinner so we had a full house.

The topic we were assigned was "Celestial Parenting". Tim had written his talk out. He did a masterful job and received so many compliments from those present. David, Becky, Laurel, and Angela sang "Teach Me To Walk In the Light" with Andrea accompanying with her flute, Paul at the piano, and SaraKay on the violin. Daddy and the boys sang a men's number and Daddy and I spoke.

Jenessa's family was enroute from Calgary to California for a reunion and we had them here to join us for the meal and a short visit. It was fun to get to meet them and spend a little time together. It was interesting that somehow in Daddy's visit with Jenessa's dad, Cortney, he discovered that Cortney had served as a missionary with Uncle Nate in Venezuela. What a coincidence!

Although we were thrilled with how the day went, it was a relief when it was over and we headed back to camp. I left Tim with a long list of places to go and things to do and Paul's work permitted him time to help. Before David and Andrea left Monday they washed sheets and towels and helped restore order. I really appreciated their sensitivity to the situation and the stresses we were under.

The last few days have been busy but he will be ready when Wednesday arrives. I have so appreciated all of the phone calls and emails from you children expressing support. He mentioned his siblings in his talk and I was reminded again of the importance of strong family ties.

Last Thursday night we took Tim to the temple. We arrived home from camp about 3:30 and had to be in the temple at 5:30 for the 7 p.m. own endowment session. SaraKay stayed at Becky's and Mike drove home from the site so he could be with us in the temple. Chet was in Florida for a convention and wasn't able to come. Grandpa Larsen joined us also although he had been up at 3 a.m. that morning to get to the temple for his assignment. Alva Lu was expecting company anytime and wasn't able to

join us. Later we learned that Jeanie and Scott were arriving that night for Lisa's wedding the next morning but were keeping it a secret from the family.

It was such a thrill to be together in the temple! After the session we lingered in the Celestial room for a few minutes and relished the moment. I had to smile at Grandpa Larsen's comment to me as we embraced: "Sue, this is a wonderful occasion! Tim is the 'last of the Mohicans!'"

Friday morning we joined Gary and Linda and family for Lisa's wedding. After the wedding Daddy left for camp but some of us were able to attend the wedding breakfast and reception that night. Lisa married into the Blaine Randall, Jerry Hansen families and they had a wonderful crowd at the reception. It was fun to get to see Mindy, Garon, Ryan, and catch up on the news. Staff was able to come as were Jeanie and Scott with David and Bethany. We invited them over for the afternoon and supper that evening.

John and Laurel will be blessing James this coming Sunday. Laurel's family is having a big get-together and it seemed like the right time to do it. We are so grateful for all the loving support the McAllister's have shown them over the last few months and know that this summer will always be a memorable one. John has put on the family page the information about James as well as pictures and sounds of Emma and James. We so enjoyed hearing it yesterday and visiting with them on chat last night. John has started interviewing with GE and is excited about the upcoming year in Provo in his program. The end is in sight!

Some of you may be aware that Mike has received some recognition at the INEEL for his internship. Two weeks ago he gave a presentation on his summer's work and was selected in competition with 14 other interns to represent their area at a seminar last week. He presented his information at a special meeting on Wednesday and Paul and Jenessa, Tim, Becky and Maddie and Tate were there to cheer him on. The guest speaker for the event was a Nobel prize winner of Physics and that was quite a thrill for Mike to be able to visit with him for a while. All in all, I think this internship has been a great experience for Mike professionally and also allowed him to do some missionary work with co-workers.

He has completed his dental admissions forms and is awaiting word back now from schools. His fall semester will be light enough that he hopes to do his interviewing and not interfere too much with his class load. He received full tuition for the winter semester although he will not receive scholarship help for fall since he took ½ credit less than was required to maintain his scholarship for fall. He was disappointed to find that out but has decided to graduate in April and stay in Provo instead of finishing up in December as he had previously planned. He is job hunting and hoping to find employment that will permit him the freedom he needs for interviewing.

Several of you have asked about Jenessa. She has received her work visa and is now employed at the Madison Hospital as a Diatec. She and Paul continue to date but as yet, nothing is official. Paul's work has been so sporadic that he lined up a job at Wada Farms for the next few weeks until he leaves for school. Although it has been a hassle, he still has had enough work to earn what he needs for his next year at college.

Come September Paul and Mike will join John and Laurel and Tim in Provo and things will calm down around here again. SaraKay and I need to go school shopping and catch up on other things but for now we are anxious to finish up our summer's work.

We received word from Stephani that Linds was called to the stake high council yesterday. Becky was released from Young Women and made a counselor in the Primary yesterday. Mike hiked to Table Rock on Saturday with a group of young adults and he has a date this week with Annie Kesler. Andrea and family will join us on Wednesday at the MTC for Tim's send-off. They are spending some time with the Cottam side of the family before returning to Tucson. Becky, Shauntel and Steph are having a "girls night out" trip to Chicago. They will meet and spend a couple days together while their hubbies take care of the kids back home.

August 13, 2000

[Dad] Wednesday was a full day with driving to SLC and visiting with Sue's parents and then going on to Provo to deliver Tim to the MTC, and then driving all the way back to Island Park Scout Camp. I can testify that the MTC experience doesn't get any easier after seven missionaries. It is still an emotional time when

you have to leave through one door and the missionaries leave through another. It is also a relief to have one's missionary left in such capable hands and know that his feet are firmly planted on the path he will pursue for the coming months.

The hardest part of the goodbyes were the continuous calls from Tim's siblings the last couple of days with their emotional farewells to him. It was sweet to visit with Arch and Ilene and have him give Tim his "Epistle I" of advice and counsel.

We met Andrea and her two girls at the MTC and they were able to share that experience with us. Utah Valley seemed its usual busy, frenetic pace full of people rushing everywhere. It was good to be able to leave the Utah traffic behind and head back to Idaho. We love each of you and appreciate your support for Tim at this time.

[Mom] It's been nice to have a little more time at home today. Rushing back to Island Park each Sunday evening for staff check-in at six has kept us hopping. Last week was fun with a reduced program, demands, and staff, and Daddy feels like this week will be even easier. I'm hoping to find time to take inventory, pack up supplies that are to be shipped and returned, and pretty much clear things out by Saturday night. I'm hoping I don't have to go back up next week since SaraKay and I need some time to get her ready for school.

Tuesday night we were scheduled to meet with President Shipley for Tim's setting apart. Mike and Paul were with us. Prior to that Daddy gave Tim a father's blessing with Mike and Paul joining in the circle. It was a touching experience for us all. When President Shipley finished interviewing Tim prior to setting him apart, he commented that he wished every missionary could be as prepared as Tim is. We appreciated that vote of confidence.

Wednesday was a joyful day. We left here about 7:30 a.m. and drove to the Murray Care Center where we spent an hour visiting with Grandma and Grandpa Richards. It was hard to feel like we had any privacy with all the workers milling around caring for things, but we were grateful that we were able to spend the time there.

When we first got there, Grandpa was in a therapy session, but the nurse postponed it and we were able to go into a corner of the dining room and sit and visit. It was the first time I had

been there since Grandpa's accident and I could see that it had taken its toll on him. He seemed tired and his coloring wasn't very good. Grandma said that he had an appointment with the cardiologist on Friday to make sure his pacemaker was functioning properly.

We arrived in Provo in time to grab a bite at Chevy's. Mike tutored Tim on some of the finer points of eating with tortillas and we enjoyed the time together. We arrived at the MTC shortly after 1:00. As we were pulling along the curb where we were to unload the suitcases, we spotted Andrea, Laurel, and Angela. Andrea's mother had offered to take care of Joseph while Andrea and the girls had an afternoon to see Tim off and then to tour the campus and get some ice cream at the Cougar Eat. It was fun to share the event with them.

The last few days had been so full of friends dropping in and of siblings calling to say their good-byes that I didn't think there were any more tears to shed, but when the time came, it still turned out to be a pretty teary good-bye. We took lots of pictures and relished the experience. As I sat there listening to the instructions and talks, the thought came to me that the next time we saw a missionary off, it would probably be Dad and I. Wow! I will finally get to go out the other door and find out what goes on for the missionaries!

After leaving Tim at the MTC we went to the bookstore so Mike could check on textbooks for fall semester. SaraKay and I took a detour to the restroom and who should greet us but Laurel. They had walked over from the MTC and we just happened upon them so Andrea treated us to frozen yogurt while Dad and Mike checked out the bookstore. I knew that my sister, Deniece, was on campus attending a seminary teacher's seminar, but I didn't think there was much chance of seeing her amidst all the hordes of people on campus. What a sweet surprise to have her come walking up and then sit with us for a few minutes of visiting. I felt like the Lord had been gracious to us in permitting us those few minutes together.

En route to camp that evening we stopped and got Karina Jenks. We had arranged for her to come spend the remainder of the week with us. She and SaraKay are good friends and they thoroughly enjoyed sharing the time at camp.

They had their own tent in the staff area, and Karina got a staff shirt so she felt like one of us.

We've had a busy weekend but just knowing that this is the last time we'll have to go to camp makes it easier to handle. This next weekend Mike is leaving for Provo and John and Laurel will be en route from Iowa. Hopefully the following Thursday we will be bringing Paul to school and we can see our newest grandson.

August 24, 2000

[Mom] I just spent the last half hour typing up missionary letters from Tim and transmitting them only to discover that Mike had already typed them up and sent them out. We have been so busy that I didn't think to ask him to do it for me and he just moved ahead. I guess he is so accustomed to covering for us this summer that he forgot to mention it.

We are home and trying to regroup after our eight-week absence. Our first concern has been getting Mike and Paul off to school and we have been organizing, mending, shopping, and doing whatever we needed to get Mike out the door this morning. Paul's last day of work was today so we will be leaving first thing in the morning with him for Provo. I'm grateful we have a pick-up to haul stuff in since we are also taking some of the leftover food from camp to the Provo bunch and the coolers take up a lot of space needed for packing everything else.

We are excited to see James Berkeley for the first time. John and Laurel arrived Monday afternoon after a long trip back from Ohio. Emma had a rough time adjusting to the long hours in the car and was so glad to finally be back in her own bed. Luckily, James handled the ride well and just ate and slept most of the way. What a relief to have them safely back! Mike will spend the night with them tonight and hopefully he and Paul will be able to unload their stuff into their apartment tomorrow.

This morning Becky called to say good-bye and expressed that she would like to be in Provo for a day to feel the excitement that is so much a part of this time of the year as all the students arrive. It's a wonderful time, even for Dad and I who have made this trek many times. In fact, last night I was thinking about how hard it will be when our final child is through at BYU and we have no reason to be in Provo.

I'm so glad to be home! The weeks were getting awfully long towards the end. Daddy received word this afternoon that the Yellowstone forest fire was within ten miles of camp and the authorities were asking everyone to evacuate. Thank goodness our camp was empty and Daddy hasn't had that to deal with although he is concerned about all the facilities and the possible ramifications of a fire coming through the camp. This has been a terrible fire year for Idaho. Isn't it amazing that in three short years we have gone from flooding to drought conditions! It makes me realize how dependent we are on the Lord.

SaraKay was sad to leave Island Park. The last week she had several Girl Scout troops in camp with girls who were her age and she became friends with them and kayaked, swam, hiked, and enjoyed other activities right along with them. It made for a fun week for her and my work load was reduced so I was able to pretty much handle things without her.

Monday I took her shopping for school clothes and she quite handily spent her summer's earnings by the time everything was purchased. She is excited to get into school but she is wringing all the fun she can out of these last few days. Last night she and Mike slept on the tramp together and identified several constellations from her camp "star finder". She has certainly gained an appreciation for a lot of new things with her experiences this summer and I'm sure it will be a memorable part of her growing up years.

My thoughts turn to Tim several times each day. His summer absence made it more difficult for me to send him off and already I miss him. But then, I have felt homesick for many of you children these last weeks as I have been so removed. It seemed like the minute I arrived at our cabin, my thoughts were concentrated on my trading post job and it was difficult to feel like I was in touch with home and family.

I told Daddy the other night that I didn't realize how much I love being home and able to care for things here. I missed watching my flocks bloom and spending time grooming my flower garden. I missed being a part of community and ward activities and the interaction with friends and neighbors.

On the other hand, I felt like our summer was a success. It was fun to see Daddy function as

director and to be a support to him instead of being apart for two months. I enjoyed the new friends I made and the chance to try my hand at retailing. I felt like the time at camp gave me a break from some of the worries I struggle with here at home and gave me a fresh perspective on my role in the family. I certainly learned about a lot of new things and came to understand a little better the scouting life. It was especially sweet to share so much time with SaraKay and to work together. Each night we had scripture time and family prayer together and many nights we would quietly visit before falling asleep. We would "man" our flashlights to make our last trek to the bathroom and usually take the opportunity to gaze at the starlit sky for a few moments on our way back to the cabin. It was nice to have meals provided and to walk away from kitchen duty. I even learned to appreciate the green pants and tan shirt that we wore each and every day.

Sunday we had pieced together dinner and cleared away Saturday's rubble so that we had a place to sit and eat. We hadn't been eating long when someone knocked at the back door. We assumed it was Melanie Hanni since she is usually the one that uses that entrance, but it was Dad and Alva Lu who were returning from a speaking engagement in Pocatello and had decided to drop in for a few minutes. We were grateful we had enough food to offer them a plate and we sat and ate and visited. It turned out to be a delightful time together. I really felt that we had "entertained angels unaware". They are so dear to us and it was sweet for Paul to get to see them before leaving for Provo.

[Dad] I just want to add a few comments. It is good to be home and settling back into the community, ward, and neighborhood. The last couple of weeks started to get pretty long. Our weeks at camp with girls there were a little lighter in work load and stronger on appreciative and cooperative campers. It really was a delight to share the summer with Sue and SaraKay and it was neat to watch how SaraKay reveled in every activity and didn't want to miss a thing. I was proud when she passed her swim check and was able to do everything at the waterfront. It was fun to watch her make a pair of moccasins, a teepee kit, and a walking stick.

I have been back to camp to haul down another load of stuff from the office, including the rifles, phone, computer, etc. Elmo and I walked the

camp, checking everything and I feel good about the condition in which we left things. There is supposed to be an Order of the Arrow fellowship and ordeal this week end, if the fire doesn't drive us off.

Much of my attention for the next few weeks will be Tiger Ears. We are trying to get the signups for all the districts and fill all the shifts. I have unloaded the balance of our needs from Sysco--oil, powdered milk, napkins, paper towels, etc. today. The booth is just about ready and we will be hauling stuff in next week and getting ready to start next Saturday.

August 27, 2000

[Mom] Last week turned out to be more complicated than we had expected. Mike left Wednesday morning with his car packed to capacity and we planned to bring the remainder of his belongings with us the next day. Paul's last day of work was Wednesday. He had been a little apprehensive about his final day of work because he had learned that there were usually pranks pulled on a person's last day. Several of the Mexicans had teased Paul about the tricks they were going to play on him. I was worried because any kind of horseplay around equipment usually spells trouble and I didn't want him getting hurt. He had already put up with a lot of teasing, being the only Caucasian on the crew. He assured me that it was all in fun. When he left for work on Wednesday, I worried about him but prayed that he would find a way to avoid the hazing.

When he arrived home about six that evening, my first questions were about how he had fared. He said that he decided early in the day to find a hiding place and then to quietly slip away before closing so the main instigators on the crew couldn't find him. On one of his breaks, he found a hiding place and determined to carry out his plan. Later that day, as the crew was cleaning up before closing, he manned a broom and began sweeping in the direction of the hiding place. When no one was looking, he slipped into his spot and waited a short while until the clean-up was completed. He remained hidden until most of the crew finished and when they couldn't find him, they left the plant and he came home. I was so relieved to have him home safely.

Thursday morning we left about 8:30 for Provo. We were grateful to have the pick-up to pack

into and completely filled it by the time we were through packing coolers, bikes, clothes, books, and other items for their apartment. It was quite a challenge to have cooler space for the food we took. When we finally finished packing and securing the load, Daddy brought out a flat of eggs that I had wanted to take and he put it at the back of the pick-up on a box. He then laid a stalk of celery that we hadn't had room for in the coolers on the eggs. It looked ridiculous to have the eggs and celery just sitting on top of everything else but we were out of room and out of time and in a hurry to get on our way.

All the way to Provo, whenever we would pass a vehicle that sat up higher than we did, I would wonder if the driver was looking in the back of our pick-up and wondering what in the world was going on with the eggs and celery. Luckily, we didn't have to explain ourselves to anyone and we made the trip in good time with our load surviving nicely.

John was babysitting when we arrived since Laurel was hosting the first MBA Wives luncheon. Guest speakers for the event were Mrs. Henry Eyring and Mrs. Henry Eyring Jr. whose husband is presently over the program at BYU. When Laurel arrived home, she filled us in on some of the amazing things she learned from the Eyring women. Mike and Grant joined us for lunch and we unloaded the pickup into John and Laurel's apartment since the boys weren't able to get into theirs until the next morning.

Our plan was to spend some time with Grandpa and Grandma Richards that afternoon en route home so we left about 3:00 and headed for Salt Lake. As we were leaving Provo, Daddy noticed the alternator light was on and the battery gauge showed that our battery was low. He wasn't sure how long it had been low or what the ramifications were for us but we decided to move ahead with stopping at the rest home. When we visited with Grandpa for a few minutes and explained our situation, he advised us to leave immediately in case we didn't make it home before dark and had no headlights. We had made a trip years ago from Salt Lake with a bad alternator, but on that occasion, as long as we kept the radio and headlights off and the car running, we made it home fine. What we didn't know about our pickup was that the fuel pump was electronic and when the alternator stopped working, eventually the pickup would stop because it wasn't getting any fuel.

We debated about taking the freeway verses State street where pulling off would be easier, but Daddy decided to just take the freeway and do the best we could to get on our way home as quickly as possible. We hadn't gone very far before the alternator gauge was in the red zone and Daddy became very concerned about what we should do. As we approached Layton, he made the decision to go to Aunt Karen's since he suspected we would get stranded if we continued on any further.

Although Karen was surprised by our unexpected visit, she was a gracious hostess and fed us supper while we waited for Jim's battery charger to charge us up enough to continue on. Another bonus of our visit was that Mark, Janette and JoEllen were spending the night with Karen en route to Ricks College and so we visited while we waited.

About seven, we left Layton, full of hope that we would be able to travel on without incident. Just in case, we called our mechanic, Ron Mangum, and he said he would be home for the evening and able to give us some help if we needed it. He said that since the fuel pump was electronic, he suspected that we would have to make more stops before our trip was completed. He was right. Before we made it to Tremonton, the gauge was again in the red and we had a decision to make whether to continue on and risk being stranded or stop in Tremonton. We chose to continue on.

As the gauge dropped, we prayed that we would make it to Malad where we could get assistance. Ten miles outside of Malad, the engine began to falter. We kept going and jerked along until we pulled off the freeway at the first Malad exit and stopped at a convenience store to ask for help. There was a man who was mopping the floor who overheard Daddy asking if anyone had a battery charger that we could use and this fellow stepped forward and said that he had one and that he would call his friend and see if he could bring it over. I imagined that it might take a long time to get the friend to come, but within just a few minutes, a pickup arrived and we soon were being "charged again". We waited until the gauge was up again and took off from Malad. It was so dark by then that we didn't dare drive without headlights so we turned them on and started for the summit.

It soon became obvious that we were in a race against time. The pickup began to falter before we made the summit but somehow, we made it and right at the summit of Malad Pass the engine stalled, the lights went out, and we were in total darkness. Since there weren't any other cars on our side of the freeway, we coasted down the pass in darkness. I was watching the white line on the side of the road and also straining in the darkness, watching for any deer that might be on the road. By the time we had coasted out of the mountains, we had enough momentum that we coasted into a truck stop and parked. We called Ron and he informed us that he thought he had located an alternator and was picking it up and would meet us in about an hour at the truck stop.

When Ron arrived, he planned on installing the new alternator, but discovered to his dismay that the alternator was the wrong one and wouldn't work for our model. He decided to tow us home and so SaraKay and I rode with him and Daddy rode in the pickup. We left the truck stop and started out. We hadn't gone more than a few miles before Ron's vehicles' "service engine" light came on and within a few seconds his car engine died. We were able to keep up the momentum long enough that we coasted into the next truck stop a few miles down the road at McCammon.

To make this long story a little shorter, I'll just say that we had to call his wife and she came at midnight to take us all home, leaving the two dead vehicles at the truck stop for the night. We arrived home at 1:30, tired and frustrated. The next morning Ron got the right part and we had our pickup fixed and home ten minutes before Daddy had to leave for the stake youth retreat in Island Park! What an ordeal!

On a more positive note, Daddy had a great experience with his youth council at the retreat and arrived home Saturday night tired but pleased. Mark and girls arrived about three on Saturday, spent the night and left Sunday morning to spend some time with other family members. We spent such an enjoyable evening with them and thoroughly enjoyed the visit!

School will be starting on Wednesday and our summer will draw to a close. I received word from David that he is flying in to Boise on Wednesday for an interview with a company there. He asks for your faith and prayers that he

may present himself well and be able to assess the situation correctly. Andrea has been nauseous and under the weather but their spirits are good and they are continuing to investigate job opportunities that would enable them to be a little closer to family.

[Dad] Last week's ordeal with the generator was a learning experience. There was a time when I had the impression we should just pull into a garage and get the problem taken care of. We would have been better off if we had, but we would have been out a couple hundred dollars for the alternator because it was a remanufactured one that Ron was able to get replaced on warranty.

The Stake Youth Council Retreat was a resounding success. I couldn't help but think about Tim and even included him in my testimony on Friday night. We met at Karen Esplin's family cabin on the Buffalo River in Island Park (not very many miles from Scout Camp). The girls and women leaders all stayed in the cabin. Damon and I pitched a tent and President VanOrden and President Shipley slept in Pres. Shipley's camper. The boys decided to sleep in the loft of the old shed along with the mice and bats.

When we first arrived, we ate our lunches and set up camp. The first thing was a message from each of the Co-Chairmen, and then a team-building activity. I gave them the project of building a flag pole. They had to check resources, determine a location by consulting Sister Esplin, decide how to build it, and divide up the work. It was a great project involving everyone with some aspect of it and when we were through, I had a reflection to accentuate the leadership skills involved in getting the project done. It was a lot of fun. Then we turned them loose for an hour to just play in the water of the Buffalo River, which isn't very deep at that point. Dinner was Dutch oven chicken and then we continued with a message from President VanOrden, building a mission statement, and calendaring.

We had good input and discussion from the youth. Just before dark we had a flag retirement, which ended up being a great way to set the mood for the testimony meeting which followed. The next day, we had breakfast, a solo time for each, and then went to the Island Park reservoir to water ski and tube behind Pres. VanOrden's

and Damon's boats. It was a great success and the council bonded well. I did a little bugling at appropriate times— which added to the spirit of the occasion.

September 5, 2000

[Mom] We received a phone call from Grandma on Saturday informing us that while two aides at the rest home were getting Grandpa into his wheel chair, the chair started to roll, Grandpa started to fall and one of the aides grabbed his broken arm to catch him and, in the process, injured it again. Initially they thought that it was rebroken, but after x-rays were taken, they determined that the soft tissue in the shoulder socket had been injured and the fracture that was on the x-ray was the one that he received from the break several weeks ago. It has been very painful and Grandpa has had to be on medication. Nate and Maureen were visiting from Billings and Nate was able to give him a blessing Sunday morning before they left to return home. Grandma said that they won't be able to tell if surgery is going to be needed to repair the cup or if it will heal itself. Remember them in your prayers.

The fair is in full swing and Daddy's days are filled with keeping the Tiger Ear booth running and the volunteers coming. He really gets bone-tired from all the lifting of flour and sugar bags and other supplies. Fortunately, the other scout professionals spell him off about five every day and he comes home for the evening. Some nights he is on the phone lining up help to finish filling the shifts for the following day but tonight he is home relaxing a little.

Last weekend Becky and Chet were in Salt Lake for a family reunion and visited the Provo bunch. They all went to dinner together (courtesy of Chet), visited the new library on campus, and then played games at John and Laurel's. It sure sounded like a lot of fun!

It's been interesting over the years to see the composition of who's in Provo. Already this year we've been grateful for John and Laurel's watchcare over the singles bunch (Mike, Paul, and Grant). Mike's car died in the JKHB parking lot and John helped him get it towed. Hopefully it won't be too expensive to fix.

Last Sunday I got released from Primary and put in as gospel doctrine teacher. When Brother Adams called early in the week and scheduled

to meet with me before meetings on Sunday, I knew something was up. Daddy had been hinting since the present teacher, Farrell Wray, was put in the high priest group presidency that I was going to be called but I didn't think they would release me until after the Primary Sacrament meeting program.

Saturday night I didn't sleep very well and had some crazy dreams that I realized were evidence that I was worrying about the call. The next morning, after meeting with Brother Adams, SaraKay and I went on into sacrament meeting and a few minutes after the opening prayer, SaraKay leaned over and said, "Mom, you've got on a black shoe and a blue shoe." I looked down and to my dismay, she was right! I guess I had been more preoccupied than I realized! Anyway, I've spent every spare minute this week reading the lesson and trying to figure out just how to put it together. It is going to be a challenge but hopefully I'll enjoy it.

Kim Hansen, the council executive, lost his wife to cancer last Friday. We made a visit to his home Sunday evening and he recounted for us some of the events of her final days. It was sweet to hear the stories of some of the faith-promoting things that happened and the confirming of their faith even in the worst of circumstances. Kim's son, Ryan, was on our staff at Island Park, and so we have been quite close to the situation and the progression of the cancer. Linn had spent the last several months having a bone marrow transplant, and living in Salt Lake while she was responding to the treatments. It has certainly been a sad thing to watch and such a loss to their young family.

David interviewed in Boise but had some reservations about some of the things he saw and heard while visiting the company. He knows that he has a good situation in Tucson and doesn't want to jump at an opportunity unless they know they are bettering their situation. As much as we want them closer, we know they are wise to proceed with caution. Andrea has been struggling with nausea more this pregnancy than before but has been fortunate to have had her mother there for a while to lift some of the load.

[Dad] Sue mentioned the Tiger Ear Booth—it is my life for a couple of weeks of the year. We replaced the only old fryer with a larger new one this year. We also expanded the capacity of the

fans pulling the greasy air off the cookers and bought some cushioned pads to stand on for those who are pretty much stationary. These improvements have improved conditions and capacity of the booth.

Saturday and Sunday we were \$500 better each day than we were the same day last year. Monday was down by \$175 from last year's record day. Today has been really slow with hardly a soul on the fair grounds and so I am afraid we will be down again. I'm always amazed at the number of people that make commitments to be there that do not show or call and cancel out at the last minute without a real reason. The scriptural statement about those who say they will go and then not go takes on a whole new meaning.

I was impressed with a statement that I ran across: PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT YOU SAID, ... BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

That is really true!! I always appreciate Sue's insights and suggestions that impact on how other people feel. I am also excited about her new calling in the Sunday School. I had a pretty strong feeling that it was coming. John Fisher was working in the Tiger Ear Booth today and commented on how happy he was to see her in that role.

September 12, 2000

[Mom] My thoughts have been with Tim these last few days since receiving word of his MTC struggle. I know that he has appreciated all your efforts to encourage him. He is reaping the benefits of having so many siblings and in-laws who served missions and who can understand what he is going through.

We had a wonderful visit with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen last night. We visited for a long time about their experiences in the temple. Last Friday the endowment work was done for three Queens of Egypt born in the years before Christ's birth! What an amazing thing. They said that special permission had to be given by the First Presidency for the work to be done. Grandpa continues to do marriages in addition to his presidency responsibilities and sometimes is at the temple for nearly 12 hours at a time. It is exhausting for both of them and miraculous that they can keep such a pace. We

feel strongly that President Packer's promises to Grandpa are being fulfilled and that he is given the abilities that he needs to carry out his duties. When we left, we commented to SaraKay that in the coming years as she prepares to enter the temple, she will think back on these sweet conversations that she has shared with Grandpa and Grandma and she will treasure them. So will Daddy and I!

After visiting at Grandpa and Grandma's we dropped by Becky and Chet's and returned their Kirby shampooer that I borrowed to clean my carpet. They are such a joy to have living close and it is all we can do to reciprocate for all the things they do for us. Tate has settled down and is coming into his own and usually is content to cuddle and Madison is talking and always seems so happy to see us.

The fair is over for another year and Daddy has set records again. Although the weather was windy and cold and rainy at times, the booth broke records for sales again for the sixth year. On Saturday alone they sold \$12,000 worth of Tiger Ears. That's a lot of dough! (Pun intended)

I just got back from a short visit with President and Sister Bowman. Their son, Layne, died Friday. He was 31 years old and had outlived the normal lifespan of most Downs Syndrome children. His life and their tender love and watch care for him have been an inspiration to our community over the years. Carol said that towards the end of his life, he was retaining water so badly that it wasn't at all unusual for them to drain off a gallon of water through the shunt in his chest. When he would get so bloated, his limbs would be tight like a drum and it was painful for him to move. President Bowman gave him a blessing Friday night and released him and ask the Lord to permit him to go quickly so he wouldn't have to suffer any longer. Within a couple minutes, while President was preparing him for bed, he fell over onto the bed and was gone. He will certainly be missed!

My experience teaching the gospel doctrine class Sunday was thrilling. It felt so good to be with adults again and to be able to discuss the scriptures and feel the sweet testimonies of the class members. I am excited to be able to give more time to scripture study and feel that influence more keenly in my life. I know I will miss the children, though, and hope they will not forget me too soon. Daddy had thoroughly read

his lesson and was there for me in case no one else had the answers and I appreciated his support. Mike is right: teaching the Book of Mormon is awesome!

We are leaving in a while to go and clean the Tiger Ear booth. Some people go in on Sunday to clean things up but I've been grateful that Don Scott and Daddy put it off until Monday and we don't have to give the fair another Sunday. Daddy is going to take off a day this week and we are going to go to Layne's funeral and take in a temple session. It really feels nice to have our summer camp and fair behind us and have time to prepare the yard and things for the upcoming winter. I'm trying to convince Daddy that he should take off more than one day especially since he has worked the last 12 Saturdays!

When I called John and Laurel last night, John was on campus retrieving his bike. He had been in classes on Friday and there was such a downpour that Laurel had driven to campus to bring him home. It wasn't until late last night that he remembered that his bike was still on campus and went to get it.

Before I finished visiting with Laurel, John had returned and commented to me that it was nice to be on campus when everything is quiet and peaceful. He said that as he walked across campus in the dark that he had the impression that he was on "holy ground". I thought that was quite an amazing thing, especially for a young father/student who is feeling so much pressure right now, both academically and financially. I had to admit to John that I never visit the campus that I don't have a similar witness and feel a renewed appreciation that so many of our family have been privileged to partake of the BYU experience.

[Dad] The Tiger Ear Booth is almost over for another year. There is the matter of disposing of the surplus ingredients and hauling flour around, but we are basically there. We were blessed to be able to do over \$2,000 more than last year thanks to the Friday concert of "Def Leppard" and the Demolition Derby.

Sue does a great job with her teaching and Sunday School was no exception. It was great to feel and hear the response of members to her questions.

September 19, 2000

[Mom] Daddy and I just returned from the viewing for Gerald Larsen. He passed away last Friday from causes incident to age. His son, Mike, is the high counselor who works with Daddy in the stake Young Men's program and so we felt like we needed to pay our respects. Over a year ago, Gerald and Myrtle lost a daughter in a car accident. Since that time the three children who were orphaned by the accident have been raised by Mike and Nikki. One of them, Mori, worked the last two summers at camp for Dad and the extended family have been very appreciative for all Daddy has done to help him. Another interesting twist in the Larsen family is that their daughter, Sue, and her husband have adopted two Afro-American babies this past year. When the whole family gets together it is truly a multi-racial event since they have Caucasian, negro, Hispanic and Indian races all represented.

I substituted at seminary on Friday. I wondered how I would get all the preparation done for my gospel doctrine class and also for the New Testament lesson that I needed to teach in seminary, but things worked out and I quite enjoyed it. I didn't feel as good about my Sunday school class this week as I did last, but Daddy gave me some ideas for things that might improve my presentation and draw more people in. He has been good to read the lesson and respond if no one else does.

SaraKay and her friend, Angela Winder, performed at the Middle School last week in an assembly. Linnea Hammond is promoting a strings program at the middle school and trying to get enough students interested to make it feasible. The after-school program will be run by Colleen Winder and Joy Lynn (Hammond) Taylor and will be for 45 minutes after school on Monday and Wednesday beginning after harvest. If this program gets started, it will change our situation and we will need to make some decisions regarding SaraKay's private violin study. I'm waiting to see how things work out and for now we are mainly focusing on the piano and trying to pick up where we left off before the summer vacation.

Daddy and I spent part of Wednesday in the temple. It was the first time we had been through a session since we went through with Tim. I put his name on the temple prayer roll

before we left for home. We were truly relieved to receive his letter on Saturday and learn that things are going better for him.

Spud harvest is on the horizon and this Thursday we will be leaving for our short trip to see Shauntel and Randy. We are still awaiting word as to whether Nate and Maureen will be joining us but we are planning to leave Thursday afternoon and return on the 27th. Randy is hoping to get off work on Monday so we can make an excursion to Nauvoo for the day. We are renting a car since all of ours are getting so many miles on them.

We have spent some time each evening watching the Olympics. We have so enjoyed the short vignettes done on some of the athletes and thrill at their proficiency and spirit. I keep thinking about the Olympics to be held in Salt Lake in two years and hoping that everything will work together for them to be successful and an opportunity for the world to get better acquainted with the Church.

[Dad] When we went to the temple, we were called on to be the witness couple. It has been a long time since that has happened to us. It was a small session and we were able to go through quite expeditiously, but able to savor the experience. We were able to make it home to Layne Bowman's viewing and funeral. What a special experience that was!! It is incredible to me, the number of lives that a Down's syndrome person like him has been able to touch and often in very spiritual and significant ways. The worth of a soul is great and all who felt of Layne's spirit were impressed with the greatness they glimpsed there.

Tiger Ear flour is all sold and moved, including 68 bags left over from last year. It is a relief to have it all wrapped up. I have also been able to spend a little time on my office at work and to get it all cleaned up and spiffy. It is a joy to walk into my office now!

With regard to the temple, I have been listening to a tape by Elder Marion D. Hanks about making temple worship meaningful. I would like to just share a couple of thoughts from his talk. First of all, he emphasized that we come to know Christ through the ordinances of the temple beginning with the initiatory ordinances and culminating with the sealing ordinance. He suggested reading D&C 109: 1- 35 or so before going to the temple each time. He suggests

preparing for each visit to the temple and coming in a spirit of meditation, ready to be taught by the spirit—versus hurrying, or coming in haste. He suggests reading and thinking about Mosiah 2-4 and especially 2:9—"...open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view." He also reminds us that it is important for us to go back often, that we are like Adam and Eve and their offering of sacrifices and "...after MANY days..." an angel came to them and asked them what they were doing and why. So it is with us.

September 28, 2000

[Mom] We arrived home last night about 5:30, weary and worn, but grateful for having had a safe and very satisfying trip. We left last Thursday afternoon, leaving our vehicle with Becky and Chet after picking up a rental car from the airport. Nate called early that morning with the news that they were not going to be able to go and so we changed our route and we left about 1:00 and were able to get to Laramie, Wyoming by about 9:00 that night and have a shorter distance to travel on Friday. We arrived Friday night about 6:30 and surprised Shauntel and Randy since they weren't expecting us until about midnight.

Randy left Saturday morning for his "on call" assignment and didn't return until Sunday afternoon at 3:00. We were glad to be there for Shauntel and Camille although I know they are accustomed to that kind of schedule. We took Camille to a nearby park, went swimming, and Shauntel and I even got to attend the Saturday evening Relief Society conference together. It was so inspiring and especially sweet to be sharing it with a daughter. After the conference I met several of Shaunnie's close friends.

On Sunday we attended their ward with them and thoroughly enjoyed it. The ward has gained 40 new families since May and is largely graduate students and their families as well as some other members who are more permanent and who are so good to welcome and give moral support to the student families in their midst. There was such a warm and energetic feeling and so many small children that during sacrament meeting it sounded like nursery. I couldn't help comparing it to our ward and wishing we had more young families. It was

obvious that Shauntel and Randy have endeared themselves to many people in the area and are well thought of.

Camille is such a delight. She and SaraKay played non-stop and it wasn't until Monday that she finally seemed to be running out of energy and needing a rest from the late nights and going. Randy was able to get Monday off and we all drove to Nauvoo and toured the temple site and some displays and demonstrations. We had intended to visit the new Family Center where children can have hands-on experiences with pioneer crafts and activities, but it was closed for renovations. The guide at the temple site said that it would be spring of 2002 before the temple will be finished. Everything has taken longer than expected. The construction company is doing it's best to make it as close to the original temple as is possible.

When we returned yesterday, we found two letters from Tim which I typed this morning and transmitted. We so appreciate the loving support each of you have been to him these past weeks as he has worked through his situation. We will be seeing him off at the Salt Lake airport at 6:30 am on Monday, October 9.

Daddy and I are leaving tomorrow evening for Salt Lake where he has a scout seminar all day Saturday. I am going to stay with Grandma and help her with some cleaning in the morning and then spend the afternoon with Grandpa. His blood has gotten low again and he is in the hospital today for more transfusions. It has been discouraging for them both to not be able to find a solution to the low blood problem.

[Dad] Just for your information, we drove 3,054 miles in just over 6 days. It was a good feeling to know that we were putting that mileage on someone else's car. The car we had was getting over 30 miles to the gallon, so we spent about \$150.00 on gas. The trip for the three of us was about what air fare for one would have been.

Amen to Sue's comments about how sweet it was to be with the Anderson's. I was surprised at how willing Camille was to accept "Grompa." It was fun to play with her and SaraKay in the Aquatic Center pool. While the big girls went to the Women's Conference, I took the little girls to the Mall. We had a fun time on the Carousel and visiting all the neat shops.

One of our favorites was a large sports shop that had a lot of taxidermy exhibited with ducks,

pheasants, deer, elk, moose, bear and mountain lions all represented. Then we found a large play area with big John Deere toys and tunnels and mats for the kids to play on. It was just teeming with kids of every size and color. What a fun place for little kids to play while adults get a chance to sit and rest around the perimeter and all under the watchful eyes of security guards.

Nauvoo is such an awesome experience. We were able to go on a horse drawn carriage ride and see some things that we hadn't seen when we were there before. I never cease to be amazed at the creativity and talents exhibited by the Saints as they built up a city that was a cultural center and a major influence in the United States at the time. I am grateful for those who have helped with funds and resources to restore so much of the homes and shops of the period to be able to give us a sense of the quality of life they enjoyed, but how hard they had to work for so many things that we just take for granted today.

The temple is truly an imposing and impressive sight. It really seems incredible to see it rising above the trees and other buildings and replicating history in its prominence over the townsite of Nauvoo. On our horse and wagon ride we saw shrubs and plants that had been moved from the temple site and transplanted until the construction is complete and they are able to be used to landscape the completed temple.

On the way home we came through Denver and stayed the night with Mark and Rita. We had forgotten that they have cats and I was really worried about Sue's reaction. Fortunately, Rita had some homeopathic drops that you put under your tongue as needed and that almost totally held Sue's allergic reactions at bay. It was great to visit with them, though Mark was gone most of the evening to a play practice, and to see the progress Jessica has made. I am reminded again of how important our familial relationships are and the dividends paid on any investment of time and energy to strengthen those bonds.

October 4, 2000

[Dad] On Saturday I had a Scouting meeting at Camp Tracy up Mill Creek Canyon in Salt Lake. We decided that would be a good opportunity for Sue to visit her parents. I had made

arrangements to take three of my primary Tiger Ear volunteers and their wives out to dinner at the Shilling House on Friday evening so we were not able to leave town until after that. We ended up in Salt Lake about 11:45 and 7:00 the next morning came altogether too quick. After dropping Sue off at her Mother's, it only took me about 12 minutes to get to Camp Tracy. It was a great meeting with representatives from all the Councils in Utah and Idaho. My section on endowment was led by my friend Perry Cochell from the Western Region office in Phoenix.

One of the highlights of last week was the LDS Relations meeting on Thursday night with Elder Madsen of the General YM Presidency and our area presidency. He reaffirmed very strongly the commitment to Scouting by the First Presidency and the Church. He quoted Elder Perry at a Tri-cities Regional Conference as saying what a tragedy it is that some companies in the country are withdrawing their financial support of Scouting in favor of the gays. But he affirmed that the great and honorable men of America will step forward to fill the void. Elder Madsen asked these three questions: 1-What is the worth of a boy? 2-What is the potential of a boy? and 3-What is the destiny of a boy? He then gave scriptural answers to those questions and also talked about "How do you save a boy?" and "How do you destroy a boy?" Romans I was a source in talking about moral wrongs and men serving the creature more than the creator.

Another one of the speakers was Dave Hermansen, a member of a stake presidency in Pocatello and the Council Commissioner and a dear friend of mine. He shared a couple of quotes that I would like to share with you. The first is from President Spencer W. Kimball: "What do I wish you to teach my grandchildren and all others? Above all, I hope you will teach them faith in the living God and in His Only Begotten Son—not a superficial, intellectual kind of acceptance, but a deep spiritual inner feeling of dependence and closeness....I hope that if any of God's children are out in spiritual darkness, you will come to them with a lamp and light their way; if they are out in the cold of spiritual bleakness with its frigidity penetrating their bones, you will come to them holding their hands a little way, you will walk miles and miles with them lifting them, strengthening them, encouraging them and inspiring them."

I think the walking miles with them is often what is done in Scouting and the rest of the teaching of closeness and dependence should not be left undone.

We also had a video excerpt of a talk by Jeffrey R. Holland (in Scout uniform) as he addressed about 18,000 Scouts and Scouters attending a jamboral in Utah. He said there has not been a day of his life that has not been affected by or he has thought about some principle of the Scout Oath or Law. He told of a meeting he was chairing of University presidents from all over the country and a discussion about basic values that they could agree on that should be fostered. He felt like the meeting was a lost cause and finally in desperation said, "Well, how about the Scout Law, could we begin with something as basic as that?" From there the discussion improved and they were able to come together with a statement of values—not exactly the Scout Law, but similar verbiage.

We are looking forward to conference this weekend and especially attending the Saturday afternoon session and watching Tim in the missionary choir that will be singing. And then next Monday we will see him off at the airport.

[Mom] I received a call yesterday from Aunt Linda informing us that Maren and Brock's new baby had suffered a stroke. The last few days the doctors have been monitoring him. When I called the hospital this morning, Maren was in the nursery and I was unable to talk to her, but I did reach Jennifer, Brock's sister, and she said that they were transferring the baby to Primary Children's Hospital for observation. Hopefully in a few days, he will be able to go home. Aunt Jeanie was en route from Arizona. I know they need our faith and prayers.

Saturday we learned that we will be attending conference during the session that Tim will be singing. What a wonderful coincidence! (miracle) Mike recommended that we take our opera glasses (binoculars) and that is what we plan to do since the hall is so big that I know we wouldn't be able to spot him unless he is picked up by the camera. We are looking forward to a wonderful weekend. Friday night we will stay with Steve and Bonnie in Logan and leave on Saturday in time to get into the afternoon session.

Following the Saturday session, we will drive to Provo and SaraKay and I will stay with Laurel

and babies while Dad attends the Priesthood session with Mike, Paul, and John. We will spend the night with John and Laurel and enjoy watching the Sunday morning session with them and Grant, Paul, and Mike and perhaps even Janessa and a friend of Mike's. Following dinner we will drive to Grandma Richards' and spend the balance of the day with her and Grandpa. We will spend the night there and drive to the airport Monday morning to see Tim off at 6:30.

When I called Laurel a few minutes ago she mentioned that John is doing some interviewing with Ford this week. It has been a complicated and exhausting process to get to this point since the six that were chosen for interviews were selected from their resumes as well as from their responses on a 100 questions. It is exciting for him as well as nerve wracking to go through this. I know that several of the rest of you are also involved in this process right now and our prayers are with you. Of course, we think you are all impressive and awesome and totally qualified so if any of you need a reference just have the people call us and Dad and I will put in our two-bits worth!

Saturday evening I received a call from the high counselor over the stake YW asking me if I would be a specialist for the stake World-Wide YW Celebration for 2000. It sounded like something I could do so I agreed but since that time I have labored, prayed and sought inspiration and already I'm worn out from the worry. I have decided to put it aside for the next four days and enjoy the weekend, but it has really got me going. It's exciting but exhausting because there is no end to the creativity and effort you can put into it.

October 9, 2000

[Mom] This morning at 5:00 a.m. we arrived at the Salt Lake Airport to bid Tim farewell before his departure for Mexico. Although the hour was early, Steve and Bonnie with their four, John and Laurel with their two, and Becky and Madison as well as Paul and Mike all showed up to say their good-byes. The hour and a half went all too fast but we did take a lot of pictures and tried to capture the moments both on video and film. I was so touched by the effort the siblings made to show support and I know it meant a lot to Tim. We got one photo of Tim surrounded by the grandkids and one with the entire group. Needless to say, the tender feelings of that early

hour have stayed with me throughout the day and given me cause to reflect and rejoice on the blessings of family and the gospel. It was a sweet culmination of a wonderful weekend spent against the backdrop of general conference.

To backtrack a little. On Friday we loaded the pickup and left about 3:00 for Logan where we spent the night with Steve and Bonnie. We had ample time to visit with the children and join the family in scripture study before bedtime and then we turned on the BYU ballgame and enjoyed the evening visiting together. It was fun to catch up on the news of their family and to see the growth in the children. Rachel is in first grade now and Nate and Chrissy share time at a pre-school twice a week. Jared (alias Rulon Gardner) continues to amaze the doctors with his size and to delight his family with his mellow, accommodating personality.

The view around Wellsville is absolutely breathtaking this time of year with the foothills ablaze in fall colors. We left Saturday morning, driving through Logan canyon and enjoyed the collage of colors on the mountains created by the varieties of conifer and deciduous trees. I can see why my parents fell in love with Logan as well as each other while attending USU.

We arrived in Salt Lake at noon and walked a couple blocks to the Conference Center, allowing ample time to enjoy the experience and relish the opportunity to be with "the saints". The morning session of conference had just finished and we stood across the street from the conference center and watched as the people flooded out the doors and spilled into the streets. There were thousands of people waiting in a "stand-by" line that encircled temple square. Those of us with tickets entered the building at about 12:30 after the morning crowds had dispersed.

The whole building and its surrounding plaza, fountains, and landscape is restful and inspiring. It was such a thrill to be able to attend and see everything for ourselves. It was an added treat to know that Tim was in the MTC choir and we were able to spot him with our binoculars before the meeting began and then to watch for him when the big screen showed the choir during the performances.

When the first song was performed, SaraKay commented that she could hear Tim singing. It

seemed like such a funny thing to say considering the size of the choir and the distance from us, but the really funny thing was that I had had a similar impression when they first started singing. Anyway, it was a wonderful and memorable experience for us all.

When President Hinckley dedicated the building, he prayed that it would provide a quiet and peaceful place in the midst of the bustling city and a place where wonderful and uplifting performances could be held as well as the place from which the word of the Lord would go forth to the world. I'm sure that blessing will be realized.

We learned while we were there that starting this week the building will be shown to tour groups and the gardens on the roof and in the street will be available for people to visit.

Following conference, we left for Provo and SaraKay and I spent the time with Laurel, Emma and James while the guys attended priesthood session. We had our traditional ice cream and pie treat and a chance to review what had been talked about following the meeting.

On Sunday morning we were joined by Mike and Amber (a friend from ISU), Paul and Janessa, Grant, and two of Mike and Paul's roommates. We enjoyed the conference session as well as the chance to play with Emma and James. Although we didn't have handkerchiefs, we did stand and join in the Hosanna Shout and relish the chance to feel the spirit and see history in the making. Following dinner, we listened to conference and left about three for Salt Lake. We so appreciated John and Laurel's willingness to host the bunch whenever we come to town and to welcome roommates and friends, too.

We were commenting that this very well could be the last year that they will be in Provo if John gets a job with GE or Ford. That will be hard after having had them such an integral part of our family gatherings for the last three years.

Sunday afternoon we visited Maren and Brock and saw their cute addition to the family. Jeanie had arrived from Show Low earlier in the week and it just so happened that Christian who is attending the U was also there and so we got to see him, too. We arrived at Grandma Richards' about six and following supper we went to the rest home to see Grandpa. Uncle Charles and Brenda had been in town for conference and left

to catch their flight just a little while before we arrived.

Following Tim's departure this morning, John and Laurel followed Mike and Paul to Provo since they had had trouble with their car overheating en route to the airport. Daddy headed home and SaraKay and I rode with Becky to the Seely's to get Tate and then we left for home. Chet's family offered to tend the kids while Becky went to the airport. She knew she would need help getting home and SaraKay and I were happy to oblige. On the trip home we got to laughing about some of the awful memories we had of family trips and being crammed into the car and eating bologna sandwiches, chips, and a banana on a napkin on our laps. I had to admit that I was grateful I didn't have to relive some of those years.

In closing I want to relate an experience that Grandma Richards had this past week that I think was significant. For the last several weeks Grandma has felt the need to get her car in for a tune-up and repairs. A good friend of Kathy and Dick's, who they have had as a mechanic for their vehicles, had scheduled to work on Grandma's car after he returned from a vacation on October 16th. He had checked the car and noticed that the boots on the front trans-axle would need replacing but he thought they would be alright until he returned.

Kathy and Dick left a week ago for a short trip and weren't home for Grandma to consult with and she began to worry about whether she needed to find another mechanic or wait until October 16th. One night she had a dream and in her dream, someone came to her and ask to borrow her car. She was willing and shortly this person returned and said to her, "Ilene, your car needs fixing and it is dangerous for you to be driving it the way it is." The dream was so real that Grandma called her brother, Don, the next morning and arranged to take her car to his mechanic.

After checking it over he commented to her that she was a very lucky lady. Apparently, the loose boots on the axle had allowed water to collect next to the axle and it was almost entirely rusted through. If it had broken while she was driving, she would have had no way to control its direction. She was so grateful that she had followed her promptings.

I thought this experience was indicative of the Lord's watch care over her and that when Kathy and Dick and other family were not close at hand to give guidance and help, that the Lord revealed to her what she needed to do to be protected. I have been grateful that Grandma has been strengthened and preserved so that she is able to be there for Grandpa and be a comfort to him in his trials. Our prayers are ever with them.

[Dad] From Sue's account you have a sense of how wonderful our weekend was. It was truly a thrill to be a part of the conference. It was especially wonderful to have three of our favorite GA's speak at the session we were able to attend--Elder's Maxwell, Oaks, and Scott. The Conference Center is such an amazing and awe-inspiring edifice. Its wonders can only be hinted at through a TV camera. It takes touching, seeing and feeling in person to really appreciate it. What an honor to have Tim there singing and to know of his impending departure. It was all we could do, not to hover around the coaches that bussed in the missionaries after the session and hope to run into him.

This morning was a rewarding morning to have so much family gather to see him off. He was quite emotional, but more prepared to make the break than when he went into the MTC and had so many emotion-laden good byes. He was excited to get to Mexico and begin to use his new skills to trumpet the Gospel from the rooftops.

Friday before we left, I had an appointment for a physical exam. The nurse said I had better blood pressure than some of the teens she sees coming through. My cholesterol had improved and lipid profile was better than last year. I finally felt like my exercise routine was paying off. I have had a growth on my right temple, just barely into the hair line (there still is one, down that low). The Doctor agreed to remove it for me and so I had a scar and shaved side of my head for the weekend.

We were able to deliver potatoes and food wherever we went. The hardest part was sleeping on a different medium each night--from foam pad, to couch cushions, to trundle bed. But we made it and are glad to be back home and hopefully settling down to a more regulated routine for the next few weeks. I had a staff meeting today and was able to get home,

unload, drive to Idaho Falls and be there for 1/2 of the meeting. We received a sheet outlining our duties for next year and confirmed that the changes for me are removing my duties with Wood Badge and camp. That should make next year a little easier.

October 17, 2000

By now most of you have heard the good news that David and Andrea will be moving to Boise in the coming weeks! What a wonderful development in their lives and good news for all of us who will reap the benefits of having them closer. When I called Laurel to wish her happy birthday, she expressed her excitement at making the move to Idaho but she also said that she would be very sad to leave her wonderful teacher at school. I consoled her by saying that hopefully she would have another wonderful teacher who would also be a special friend to her as her other teacher has been. She then expressed that she truly hoped so and that she and SaraKay might even be able to be in the same class! I realized then that Boise, Blackfoot, SaraKay, and all things Idaho have been mentally rolled into one for Laurel and that it will take a little adjustment for the children to get a perspective of distances. I guess in years past, any time their family has been on Idaho soil, it has pretty much been Blackfoot. We are thrilled and so pleased that this move can take place before Andrea gets too much farther along in her pregnancy.

Becky and Chet invited us for home evening last night and we took advantage of being in Idaho Falls to drop in and spend a few minutes with Grandpa and Alva Lu, too. Daddy had meetings until nearly 7 p.m. so it made for a late night for us but it was so fun to spend the time with family. Tonight, Daddy commented that he couldn't help thinking about the four generations involved in our visits and how truly we do have "joy and rejoicing" in our posterity. SaraKay saw a whole new kind of home evening as we sang "The Wheels on the Bus", Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, and "Popcorn Popping On the Apricot Tree". For the final performance following Chet's lesson on the sacrament, Maddie did frontwards and backwards summersaults. Our own home evening tonight wasn't nearly as entertaining.

We received some photos in the mail today from the Bennion's. I have wondered these past

weeks since Linds finished up his quals if we are going to see them make a major change in their lives in the months ahead. Although I don't really worry about my married children too much, I do find myself thinking about their situations and how it will impact us here in Blackfoot. Of course, Linds knows that I think Ricks, BYU or USU would be wonderful choices if he decides to join the ranks of college professors and we would surely love having them all a little closer, too.

I called Mike last night when we got home. He and Paul were the only ones that I dared call at 10:30 pm and, sure enough, Mike was still up and had lots of news for us. He was able to secure an interview with Creighton when the rep visits the U of U campus and so he will not have to spend the time and money to make the trip to Omaha. He also had a friend who offered to help him install a thermostat in his car and it has seemed to have solved the problem he was having with it overheating. He said that he has been doing a lot of dating, but still hasn't found anyone that he is excited about. School is going well and he is enjoying his job with the Development Office although he is going to apply at the MTC next semester when he is finished with dental fly-backs and has a more normal schedule.

We miss Tim and especially miss being able to email him anytime we get the urge. We have sent him one family letter and keep waiting to hear from him so we can get the mail sent directly to him instead of to the mission home. Hopefully some of you will drop him a line and give him some encouragement. I know these first few months can be pretty overwhelming.

Steve called the other night and broke the news that he was called to be the ward scoutmaster. Of course, Daddy had lots of good advice for him and is looking forward to helping him learn his duties. Bonnie was recently called as Laurel advisor so they are going to be doing a juggling act on Tuesday nights but Bonnie's main responsibilities are on Sunday so they are hoping to make it work.

Stephani was recently called as a den mother and David has been working with the Priest age boys in his ward so we have several who are involved in scouting right now. We are always pleased to know that each of you are giving service in some capacity and doing your part to

build the kingdom. My recent assignment to pull together the YW Celebration has been a tremendous challenge since I have been responsible to line up all the music. I have scoured the countryside looking for music and have piles everywhere of different renditions of the songs we have chosen to highlight. I am also trying to get some flutes, violins, a harp, and other instruments to add to the mix and it has stretched me beyond my musical expertise. Hopefully it will all come together but at this point I have "miles to go before I sleep."

For those of you who know Marcella Clark, you may be interested to know that she passed away Sunday from a massive cerebral hemorrhage. It was especially poignant for me since I was one of the women who helped her at Relief Society on Thursday night when she started into the stroke and so I was with her in the final minutes before she lapsed into a coma. It was during my term as Relief Society president that she came into activity and since that time she has stayed active and even went to the temple this past year. Although it is tough to lose her, it is wonderful to feel that she was prepared and her life was in order.

[Dad] Sunday was a pretty full day with the beginning of our ward conference visits. It is so satisfying to feel like we are making a small contribution. The Stake theme for next year is: "We can become a millennial people as we realize more fully who we are and our potential in God's kingdom." The scripture reference is Mosiah 3:19. We decided to have father and son combinations talk at priesthood meeting when we meet and one of the ward YM presidency. We gave them more specific questions to address, such as: "How does my choice in friends influence my reaching my potential in God's kingdom?" or "How does following the prophet's council regarding my body as a temple help me to know who I really am?" or "Why is what I am more important than what I do?"

Saturday, we worked together to wash windows downstairs. We felt like a team as we worked and had SaraKay make lunch for us while we finished one set of windows. That night, the Chambers and the Drama Club at the high school put on a Medieval Feast and Shakespeare festival. We enjoyed the dinner, but it was hard to hear the actors and to catch all the humor that was reflected in their

interpretations of a broad array of Shakespeare creations. The night before, Sue and I went out to dinner at the Red Lobster with three other couples from the council professional staff. It was a thoroughly delightful evening! I heard today, that afterwards, one of the ladies that met Sue for the first time that night was so impressed, she said, "She seems like a Stake Relief Society president or mission president's wife."

I was so touched with some of the talks at conference that I couldn't wait until they come out in the Ensign so I pulled them off the internet so that I could read them. Saturday afternoon's address by Dallin Oaks struck a responsive chord. He said, "...we conclude that the Final Judgement is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts--what we have done. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts--what we have become. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become." I pray that what we are experiencing is helping us to become what we should become and that we don't become preoccupied with the outward show. As he also said, "If we are losing our desire to do evil, we are progressing toward our heavenly goal."

October 24, 2000

[Dad] A few days ago my life changed. During the course of my annual physical, my blood was drawn and it was discovered that my fasting blood sugar level was 148 (normal max is 125). The doctor then ordered a glucose tolerance test. My fasting blood sugar reading was then 149, I had to drink this bottle of glucose (sugar water) and then have my blood sugar reading taken every hour for the next three hours. After 1 hour, the reading was 220; after two hours, the reading was 310; and after three hours it was at 180. The message from this test was that I have developed Type 2 diabetes. What a shock. It shouldn't have been such a surprise with my Dad having the same problem, because it is very much genetically linked. Consequently, each of you children (and my siblings) should be aware and watch for signs of having it. We met with a diabetes counselor for instruction and a

dietician to work out diet details. In addition, I have a tester and have to take my glucose reading four times a day. The objective is to determine if my sugar can be controlled by diet only or if I am going to need additional medication because of my cell's resistance to absorption of glucose. It is a real education for us here at home. I really appreciate Sue's patience with all this and her help with my diet requirements.

I remember when Staff, Gary and I were teenagers and were eating everything in sight and Mother put up on the fridge a definition of a teenage boy--an appetite with skin stretched around it! It is a far cry from eating everything and anything to counting calories, and measuring out quantities. Goodbye Snickers--

I was reading in the BYU Magazine an article about Gandhi that was taken from a talk by his grandson. "I learned another very important lesson from Grandfather over a little pencil--a little three-inch stub of a pencil became the object of a major lesson for me. When I was coming back from my tuitions one day--I was 13 years old then, and you know how careless 13-year-olds are--I had this pencil in my hand and a notebook, and I looked at the pencil and I said, "I deserve a better pencil. This is too small for me to use." So I threw it away.

"That evening when I met Grandfather, I asked him for a new pencil. but instead of giving me a new pencil, he subjected me to a lot of questions. He wanted to know how the pencil became small and why did it become small and where did I throw it away and on and on and on. I couldn't understand why he was making such a fuss over a little pencil until he told me to go out and look for it. I said, "You must be kidding. You don't expect me to look for this little pencil in the dark."

"He said, "Oh yes, I do. Here's a flashlight. This will help you." And he sent me out with a flashlight to look for this pencil.

"I think I searched the bushes for about three hours. When I finally found the pencil and brought it to him, he said, "Now I want you to sit here and learn two very important lessons. The first lesson is that even in the making of a simple thing like a pencil, we use a lot of the world's natural resources. When we throw them away, we are throwing away the world's natural resources, and that is violence against nature.

The second lesson is that because in an affluent society we can afford to buy all of these things in bulk, we overconsume these things, and because we overconsume the resources of the world, we are denying those resources to people elsewhere who have to live in poverty. And that is violence against humanity."

[Mom] I told Daddy that I couldn't help being a little mad that he went in for his annual physical healthy and came home sick! Not really, but it seemed like that since he hasn't had any of the symptoms of diabetes and the diagnosis caught us both by surprise. The good news is that they think they have caught it early. Hopefully it hasn't done a lot of damage to his body to this point and can be controlled with careful attention to what he eats and does. Needless to say, prior to every meal we are counting portions and referring to his "diabetics bible" and doing our best to be wise. It has been disappointing, though, that with all our efforts, his readings haven't been as good as they need to be and he may have to add medication. The next session we have with the dietician will be in two weeks and at that time we will get an analysis of what the numbers mean and perhaps be able to make some sense out of the highs and lows of his blood readings.

There are many things to be grateful for; the first being that we have the time to take care of it at this stage in our lives. If it had happened a few years ago it would have been much harder on both of us. I'm also grateful that both of us have been in the habit of having annual physicals now that we are middle-aged and that this was detected before it had progressed too far. One thing is certain: we are trying harder to eat "healthy" and that will be a plus for all of us.

When Daddy called from the doctor's office last week when he was in the middle of the testing, I ask him if there was cause for concern. His simple, "Yes" sent a chill down my spine and I realized that our life was about to change. I guess we can never assume that life will remain the same.

Daddy thanked me yesterday for my efforts and patience with this and I couldn't help thinking of all the headaches and morning sickness he saw me through without a complaint and I figure he's got a lot of tender loving care coming to even that score.

My work on the YW program has settled down a bit. My Sunday School lesson yesterday was fun and I had some good feedback from class members. It is so exhilarating to teach the gospel without having to worry about disciplining or entertaining!

John received word that he will be flying to Michigan on November third for extensive interviewing and observation. It is a compliment to him that he is one out of 16 that interviewed from BYU to receive a "fly-back" and one out of 100 nation-wide that will be interviewed. He's pretty pumped about it and Laurel is, too, since they would be located just a few hours from her parents in Cincinnati.

David will be starting with Hewlett Packard November 1st. Andrea will stay in Tucson for a few weeks until their home sells and if it doesn't, she and kids will still move to Boise and the family will rent an apartment. Moves are so labor-intensive and traumatic!

Steph is trying to adjust to scouting and it is quite a challenge. She has several little boys in the neighborhood who now want to join her den and she is in a quandary as to how to proceed since she is limited in how many she can handle effectively without another adult leader.

She is enjoying her opportunity to "school" Kate and says she has continued to marvel at how much she is relishing the time together.

Shauntel said that she and Camille had taken an excursion to a Raptor Museum in Iowa City that was fascinating. When she said raptor, I conjured up a large, ferocious bird as in Jurassic Park, but she said that the museum was for birds of prey such as eagles, hawks, owls, and vultures. Birds that are injured in the wild and rescued are brought to this refuge and treated and released if it is possible for them to survive but if they cannot be rehabilitated, they are protected in this refuge and the community can visit and enjoy learning about them. Anyway, it was a delightful place to visit and educational as well. Randy's work schedule has been a little kinder the last few weeks and permitted them more time together as family.

Chet spent the week in Florida on business so Becky and kids came for a visit Thursday afternoon. It is always a treat to have them here. Becky had responsibility for the Primary Sacrament Meeting Program on Sunday as well as hosting her fall piano recital and she was

really relieved last night to get both of these events over. Chet's sister, Tiffany, is being married this week so they will be spending several days in Utah with Chet's family.

We finally received a letter from Tim today and he was happy. I will transmit it to you following this letter. It's a relief to hear from him and to know that he has a fine new companion. He is a native of Mexico and doesn't speak any English so it should be quite a challenge for them both.

October 31, 2000

[Dad] Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit with Howard Harrington for a while. He is a great man whom I have always had great respect and love for. He was interested in my family and what each of you were doing. And then he began to share some thoughts with me about the economy. He remarked how his favorite loaf of bread at Albertsons cost \$2.49 and if we took a bushel of wheat to the mill, we would net about \$1.80—a whole bushel of wheat wouldn't even pay for one loaf of bread.

It is the same with virtually all farm products. He reminded me that the situation in the "roaring 20's" was very similar. The climate in the stock market was also similar to what we are experiencing, with a sort of frenzy—borrowing to buy stocks—and millionaires being created overnight. He said that it is his opinion that we are poised on the brink of a major market depression within the next five years.

He also shared good advice on how to prepare: 1) Be spiritually prepared, 2) Pay off all consumer debt, 3) Food storage, and 4) Keep a little cash on hand where you can get at it when necessary (~\$2,000). I think his counsel is well worth heeding whether we have a depression or not and would commend his advice to each of you.

Last week I had the opportunity of going to a Wood Badge Course Director's conference at Camp Williams around the point of the mountain south of Salt Lake. There have been some major refinements in Wood Badge and other training courses in the Boys Scouts. For the first time, there is a comprehensive plan for training for new Scout leaders regardless of which Scouting family they are a part of that will avoid duplication and streamline things a great deal. Any new Scout leader will have a Fast Start overview, then Basic Training, then position

specific training, and then Wood Badge—ideally, all within the first two years of service.

Some of the concepts in training are utilized with lots of power point presentations. I am impressed with the refinements and additions that have been made. There is no doubt that it is one of the finest leadership training seminars available. I will be part of the staff for the August course at Treasure Mountain.

[Mom] It snowed yesterday, a beautiful, big-flake snow that turned our fall landscape into a winter wonderland for a few magical hours. I couldn't help thinking about the children in school and the excitement that is always generated with the first snowfall of the season. Of course, we are all praying for balmy weather for today so that "trick or treaters" won't have to bundle up like the circus fat lady, but whatever the weather, I'm sure they'll all be out tonight for the annual trek.

SaraKay has plans to be Dementor from Harry Potter and she has a large piece of black fabric that she drapes over herself. I tried to talk her out of it since it is going to be difficult to handle the costume and have hands for the treat container, but she has a mind of her own and thinks it will be just what she wants. As on most Halloween's, she'll probably discard the costume to facilitate moving a little faster so I shouldn't care about what she's chosen to be.

We were pleased to receive the upbeat and amusing letter from Tim. It's pretty special to have a first companion who is known as "The Miracle Worker". Tim's first impressions of sacrament meeting were fun to read and sparked some memories in Mike of his first Sunday in Mexico. He said that many of the people there buy clothing from thrift stores that stock items from the U.S. and that wording on the items are in English and not understandable to those who just speak Spanish. He said that the first Sunday he was in Mexico a cute little seven-year-old girl came running up to him with a big smile and he noticed that written in big letters across the T-shirt she was wearing were the words, "Sexy Chick". He couldn't help thinking how strange that seemed and how with time, those kinds of things didn't even register as odd anymore.

Daddy shared Howard Harrington's thoughts with me yesterday when he returned home from the visit. I like to hear people's ideas about the

economy. I'm not sure what lies ahead for this nation as far as the intricacies of the economy, but I value the opinions of wise people who have lived longer than I have, seen more, weathered tough times, and been successful at keeping themselves together financially over their lifetimes. Howard fits that description. I appreciated his feelings about what he thinks is on the horizon.

Later, Daddy and I discussed our own situation in light of Howard's predictions and asked, "How would we fare if his assumptions are correct?" I would like each of you to ask yourselves that question, too. I feel confident that each of you are living the gospel, giving service, paying your tithes, and doing your best to follow the prophet.

As far as debt goes, I think that debt for a home, an education, and perhaps even a car is a necessity in today's world. Of course, wisdom should be used even in these purchases. It's the consumer debt that has been difficult for us to control and becomes a stumbling block for many families.

An important thing to consider regarding buying habits on consumer items is that usually a parent's buying habits are transferred to their children and if the parent's buying habits are not sound, the children may grow up thinking there is no limit to what they can have. They become addicted to things that are really luxuries and perhaps best gone without. Even if the parent values the dollar, the child, growing up in abundance, has no concept of sacrificing or working to earn money for a special item. Teaching frugality and resourcefulness when there isn't a pressing need for them is sometimes difficult, and yet critical if future generations are to continue to do well.

The Great Depression has always held a certain fascination for me. So many people prior to the "crash" predicted that there was no way in the world that it could ever happen, but it did and devastated the nation. I recall a talk Boyd K. Packer gave when he referred to those years, and he said that his family didn't realize that there was a depression going on because they had lived that way as long as he could remember.

My own father went through the depression and he told me that people survived by producing what they consumed such as fruit, meat, produce, honey, vinegar, clothing, etc. Money

was worthless and so a person had to find another way to provide for needs. It was not pleasant, but with work, ingenuity, and a lot of going without, they survived.

This information has prompted me to try to be resourceful and learn to live simply, frugally and to keep our property in good repair in case we ever had to use it for producing more than we presently do. I think teaching our families skills in gardening, cooking, sewing, and other areas of production is a good idea and will bless their lives and generations yet to come.

Recently Daddy read an article to me from the BYU Today regarding the bonding power of family work. It is beautifully written and so insightful regarding the role of work in teaching, nurturing, and strengthening our families. A family with a small garden, a reasonable debt load, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to follow the prophet would be better able to handle whatever the future brings.

November 6, 2000

[Mom] Steph and Linds are awaiting word from Indiana University regarding the results of the doctoral qualifying exams. It could be as late as Christmas that they will find out. Of course, we are all amazed that he is to this point in his academic career since he has already "gone where no Larsen has gone before" excepting Randy and so we are immensely proud of him. (It just dawned on me that maybe Linds and Randy don't consider themselves Larsens!)

David and Andrea spent Thursday-Saturday in Boise sizing up the housing situation. The children complete their school track on November 22nd so that is the target date for the family to move although David is starting his new job this week. We are anxious to find out what their trip was like and what their impressions were of Boise. I know this next month will be a tough one for Andrea as she handles the home scene alone.

John and Laurel will be heading for Michigan in August for John's new job. John's weekend with Ford proved to be more social and less business than he anticipated and he called Laurel Saturday night with the good news that he had received an offer. We would be more hesitant to let them go if we didn't know that Laurel's family was a few hours away.

Mike received "we need more information" letters from Iowa, Case University, and Southern Illinois so it looks like he is going to be doing some interviews in the months ahead. He interviews for the IDEP (Idaho Dental Exchange Program) at ISU on November 17th. If he is accepted to that program, he could spend his first year at ISU and then continue at Creighton. There are a lot of things to consider including whether or not to try to get his training through the military. They offer some pretty good packages although he would owe them some time upon completion of his schooling.

Paul has applied for internships with GE and Micron and INEEL for this summer. John is helping him with GE and Mike's contact with his INEEL mentor could make a difference for him. The Micron one was one of the best available but many of the appointments won't be made until spring. It would be an interesting twist to have him in Boise with David and Andrea.

Last night we attended FHE at Gary and Linda's. Lisa and her new husband, Jason, were there and it was fun to get better acquainted with them. Jason is a sweet young man and Gary and Linda are enjoying having them close. Gary showed us an invitation that Garon and his father-in-law sent out to the residents in Alpine, introducing Garon to the community as a partner in the dental practice. It was tastefully done and very impressive. It's wonderful to see him doing well and getting established.

SaraKay and Angela were invited to play two Christmas songs with the community orchestra so I went to practice with her for a few minutes while they ran through those two numbers. It was very interesting since I have never been to an orchestra practice before. I feel like a whole new world is opening up to me as I become involved with her and the activities she is doing.

[Dad] Last week we went to the temple on Thursday. The primary reason for going was to attend the wedding of my Uncle Berkeley from Georgia to a widow from the Goshen area that I knew as a child. We thoroughly enjoyed the session and value the insights we receive and are able to share with each other when we attend together. We were the only witnesses at the wedding from the Larsen side of the family other than Dad and Alva Lu. Most of the rest were Cooks or Hanny's.

That afternoon, I had the first visit with my boss for a long time. He was very complimentary about the job I have done with camp and the Tiger Ear booth. But then we talked at length about things that need to be done to get the endowment effort back on track now that those interruptions are over.

We really value the times we have together with the family. The Larsen FHE each month is a valuable touchstone for us. It is good to feel the strengthening of eternal relationships as we share time and experiences and feelings. It was interesting to hear the various remembrances of Thanksgiving. Gary started out with his remembrance of the Thanksgiving when we had just moved into the home on Taber road. We had an early winter and acres of potatoes and sugar beets had been frozen into the ground before they could be harvested. That particular day, we went back out to the farm and dug and topped a couple load of beets.

One of Linda's memories was of the phone call to her father just as they were sitting down to Thanksgiving dinner to come and open the beet dump and unload the beets the Larsen's had brought in.

For Home Evening tonight, we watched the film, "Mountain of the Lord" about the Salt Lake Temple. What a beautiful and moving film!! We were touched by the marvelous gifts and talents manifested by the early Saints in building that holy edifice. We are blessed to live in a time when so many temples are being built throughout the world. Sue was reminded of the time we were all in the Salt Lake temple for her parents 50th anniversary. We recognize the blessings that have come down through the generations since their sealing.

November 14, 2000

[Mom] I had a wonderful birthday yesterday thanks to all of you. The only problem is that 55 seems so old. Some people hate it when they turn 40 or 50 but those landmarks didn't even phase me, but this birthday it really hit me that I am very close to "senior citizen" status. Daddy says the reason it's bothering me is because I have more time now to think about it than I have in previous years.

We had a rehearsal for our YW program on Saturday morning and we had a good tum-out. The old feelings of inadequacy were back to

haunt me again, though, as I led the choir, and I was reminded of how dependent I am on the Lord to see me through this assignment. I guess that is a blessing in a way because I have certainly had to make the entire experience a matter of prayer. Feeling the inspiration come is always a thrill but the work involved in getting to the point of knowing the Lord is pleased and that we have worked hard enough to invoke his blessing on our efforts takes tremendous time and effort.

Daddy has been so careful to follow the dietician's advice and has cut down on sweet intake and portion size. The result has been consistent low readings and we have both wondered if maybe he will be able to control it without medication. He has dropped about 25 pounds since June and looks so nice. He has noticed how much better his clothes fit and even his glasses fit better! Of course, this has all been satisfying and has given him a renewed commitment to continue with what he has been counseled to do.

Hopefully each of you received Tim's last letter. He seems to be doing well and enjoying his mission despite the daily challenges. He didn't mention the language so we are hoping that it is coming for him. Mike will be coming home this weekend for his ISU interview and will be flying out next Sunday to spend two days with Randy and Shauntel while interviewing at Iowa. He is hoping to get an offer from Creighton or Iowa so he won't have to fly anywhere else. He is satisfied that their programs are as fine or finer as anywhere else he has applied. His continuing car problems have been a source of worry and vexation.

[Dad] Last Tuesday was election day and as Sue and I went to the polls at 8:00 in Riverside School and saw the lines of good people there to cast their ballot, it was a sweet and almost spiritual experience. What an affirmation of this being a choice land. It has been discouraging to have the nonpartisan electoral process turned into a very partisan and politically motivated process by what is happening in Florida.

Saturday, Snake River beat Salmon to earn the right to play in the state football championship game for the third year in a row. We play in Moscow this Saturday. Sue already mentioned Stake Conference. Let me just add that it was my impression that you can't feel the spirit of a

gathering of the Saints without getting a confirmation that the Church is true and that we are indeed led by a prophet today. It was my opportunity to offer the opening prayer of the Sunday session of conference. We had a Stake Youth Choir of about 50 kids that sang a special number that was thrilling. I was also inspired by the youth choir that sang for President Hinckley's fireside for the youth on Sunday night. It was great to hear his very specific counsel to the young people of the Church and the love and concern evidenced by his prayer for them at the conclusion of his remarks.

November 20, 2000

[Mom] Daddy is taking this week off from work. He still has vacation time left for this year and this week didn't have as many demands as some others have had so he (and his boss) both decided to take a break. That's fine with me.

Mike caught a plane to Moline, Iowa yesterday and Shauntel and Randy picked him up and are helping him get him to his dental interviews. They introduced him to a dental student in their ward and he talked with Mike about some of the advantages of the Iowa program. He even mentioned a research scholarship which Mike could apply for.

We really appreciate Shauntel and Randy's efforts to help Mike. Shauntel said that she had shown Camille a picture of Mike and when he arrived at the airport, Camille ran right up to him and gave him a big hug. That may just tip the scales in favor of Iowa over Nebraska!

Mike's flight arrives in Salt Lake at 6 p.m. on Tuesday and Paul and his roommate, Steve, will pick him up and the three of them will come home. John, Laurel, Grant, and babies will arrive early Wednesday afternoon. Becky and her two will also be here Wednesday to help me with the preparations for the meal on Thursday. On Thanksgiving Day we will be playing ball from 9-11, eat at 1:00, nap, watch some football, and then we have a night of games planned. Steve and Bonnie will arrive about 5:00.

Although Steve and Bonnie will be staying until Friday afternoon, Becky and Chet are leaving Friday morning for Salt Lake to spend the weekend with his family so we decided to get in our game night before we lost part of the family. Luckily there are no prospective in-laws coming

so we can all be just as mean and competitive as we want!

Our prayers have been with David and Andrea the past weeks as they have put into motion their plans for relocation. David has been house-sitting for a missionary couple in Boise while Andrea has been handling things in Tucson. David will arrive in Tucson on Wednesday, help pack up the essentials and they will fly out on Saturday. They have rented an apartment in Boise and will live there until their home sells. They have pretty much decided on the area where they would like to buy and David has had time to do some looking.

Andrea said they will be "camping out" with air mattresses and sleeping bags in the apartment since Hewlett Packard will move them once their home sells. It sounds like quite an adventure. I still remember the moves my family made when I was a child and it was so fun and exciting although I'm sure it wasn't that wonderful for my parents. Anyway, we pray that things will all come together for them and that they can get this accomplished before the new baby arrives. David is enjoying his work and has had time to learn his responsibilities since the last few weeks he has lived alone.

Some of you have asked regarding Jenny, a student Paul has recently started dating. Paul met her on a blind date and they have been getting acquainted and we have instructed him to take her for a visit to John and Laurel's since Laurel is the resident romance counsel and I'd like her opinion on the situation.

Best go. Lots to do to be ready for Thanksgiving. We love you and give thanks daily for the joy of having you in our family. We thrill in the beautiful grandchildren that grace our lives and rejoice that in each of your families you are expending your best efforts on nurturing and teaching them righteousness. We are so grateful for the privilege of living in this free land and for the many opportunities that citizenship affords us. We recognize that all we possess comes from the Lord and we regard our membership in this marvelous church and our testimonies of its truthfulness as our most prized possession. We appreciate the continuing association with our dear parents and pray for their health and emotional well-being. Their dedication and integrity continue to inspire us to work towards leaving a similar legacy. May this Thanksgiving

season find each of you full of praise and appreciation for the Lord's tender mercies and goodness.

[Dad] Amen to Sue's comments about gratitude! I went to the doctor today for a follow-up visit regarding my diabetes and no longer have to take my blood sugar readings four times a day. Everything is looking as good as it can in light of being afflicted with a progressive disease. I am optimistic about the stabilization of my sugars and control through diet. My weight is still declining and that is always an incentive to carry on.

One of the highlights of last week was finding out on Thursday that Mike had a serious problem with his car and needed help to get up here to ISU for his interview on Friday for the Idaho Dental Program and hence, Creighton. After several calls we decided to rent a dolly to take to Provo and bring his car back for the mechanical work necessary. We left at 6:00 Thursday night, drove to Provo, met with the kids there for just a short visit, and drove back with Mike and car in tow-- arriving at about 2:00 am. Mike had a great interview and then drove back to Provo in our white car to help with a Merit Badge Powwow on Saturday morning.

Sunday was a big day with YM Presidency meeting at 7:00 am, our meetings, Riverside 1st Ward Conference, choir practice, Stake YM/YW correlation meeting at 5:00, Youth Council at 6:00 and then visiting with Chet and Becky and their family. Saturday we had SaraKay's Jazz BB game at 6:00 pm. She is doing very well--she handles the ball well, is one of the best shooters, and is always hustling and scrapping for rebounds and defensive turnovers.

I read a talk by Pres. Hinckley at BYU when he was recognized as "International Executive of the Year." He described the MTC as one of the businesses of the Church and said this about it: *"The missionaries who train here consume 24,000 pounds of cereals each year, enough to fill a meetinghouse cultural hall wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling. They eat 115,000 pounds of apples--that is 57 tons. They consume 167,000 gallons of milk--the entire production of a 300-cow dairy. They get away with 162,000 pizzas. In a single meal, they consume 75 gallons of ice cream, 125 pounds of toppings, and 11 gallons of chocolate syrup."*

In closing, I wanted to share with you a quotation from Mitt Romney when he spoke at the Marriott School convocation in April, 1999. "On my father's 80th birthday, I asked him what had brought him the most satisfaction in his life, what was his greatest accomplishment. He had been a three-term governor, a United States Cabinet member, presidential candidate, CEO, multimillionaire, and prominent Church leader. His answer was immediate: 'My relationship with your mother and with my children and grandchildren is my greatest accomplishment and satisfaction.'" What a great thought and reminder of what really matters most—those relationships should never be sacrificed on the altar of work, education, worldly aspirations, or other appealing pursuits. Love, DAD

November 28, 2000

[Mom] Last night SaraKay bemoaned, "I hate being the youngest in the family." These post-holiday blues are typical for her. She loves having the family around and hates to see everyone leave when the fun is over. I guess Daddy and I just aren't nearly as exciting as her siblings and all her nieces and nephews. We did have a wonderful holiday, though, and appreciate everyone's efforts to be here.

We had an interesting saga on Tuesday that began with an e-mail I sent to Steve and Bonnie. I transmitted it and left to take a nap without disconnecting from the internet. Daddy was busy painting the game room ceiling and I continued cooking all afternoon, neither of us realizing that our phones were tied up with the internet connection. About 5:30 the doorbell rang and Kyle Hanni informed us that Becky was calling and for us to check our phones. It was then that we discovered my mistake and we hurriedly called Becky. She had received word from Mike, who was in Denver, that his connecting flight to Salt Lake was cancelled and that he had been unable to reach Paul in Provo to let him know that he wouldn't need to be to the airport by six to pick him up. When he couldn't reach Paul, Mike decided to let us know what was going on in case Paul called to inquire why the flight didn't arrive.

Mike tried to get through to us but had finally called Becky and asked her to relay the message to us. Mike thought he could catch another flight an hour later but that too was risky since he was on stand-by. He arranged to

call Becky and let her know if he wasn't going to be able to catch the other flight and when he didn't call her by 6:00, she assumed he was Salt Lake bound. When we received word of the problem, Daddy called United Airlines and they confirmed that he had not made the flight and would be put up for the night in Denver, arriving the next morning at 8:30 am. We left word at the Salt Lake airport that if a Paul Larsen inquired regarding Mike that they were to tell him, "Phone home!" We waited.

Finally Mike called with the news that he would be flying to Boise and spend the night with David, continuing on to Idaho Falls the next morning. That was good news for Paul so that he wouldn't have to return to Provo and pick up Mike the next morning, but we didn't know where Paul was or why he hadn't called us.

At 8:15 Paul's roommate, Steve, called from the airport, wondering what was going on. He and two girls from Blackfoot who were catching a ride home for Thanksgiving had been there to receive Mike on the first flight, the second flight, and finally realized that Mike was nowhere to be gotten. Since Steve was Steve and not Paul, the United personnel didn't give him our message to call home and he and the two girls continued trying to figure out what to do. In the meantime, Paul, who had caught a ride from the airport with Jenny, was attending the Utah Symphony "Tribute to Youth" concert and having a wonderful time. He spent the night at Jenny's in Bountiful and caught a ride home the next day with someone else.

Steve finally called us and learned that Mike was on his way to Boise and that he and the girls should continue on home to Blackfoot. By the time Steve made the trip, delivered the girls to Wapello and Blackfoot and found his way here (all of this in a strange place in the dark), it was nearly midnight and Daddy and I were ready to call the police and report a missing person.

In the meantime, Mike called again saying that his third flight was delayed and he wouldn't arrive in Boise until after midnight and that he had been unable to reach David who was attending a company dinner. We kept calling David, finally reaching him and he retrieved Mike, put him up for the night and dropped him off the next morning at 6:30 at the airport so David could get to work early so he would be able to leave early that afternoon to fly to

Tucson. Mike's flight to Idaho Falls was delayed and he arrived in Idaho Falls late where Becky and Co. met him and brought him home.

As Daddy and I finally got to sleep Tuesday night, I thought, "We are already worn out and the holiday hasn't even begun!" Thanks to all the siblings who lent support during the crisis and to sweet Steve, who was a good sport to do what needed to be done in this trying situation.

We received a call from David this morning letting us know that the family had arrived safely in Boise and were settling in to their apartment. He said it felt good to be together as a family again.

Bonnie's Steve left last night for a week-long trip to New York. She commented that his last trip was the easiest time she and the kids had had and she thought that having everyone a little older was making life more manageable. That is really true! It helps to have the children start school, too, and to break up the day for everyone.

My rehearsal yesterday for our YW production went well, but I told Daddy that every time I climb another mountain with this assignment, I see other peaks ahead and know I'm not there yet. I have decided to dedicate this week to finalizing things and practicing with the small groups we have arranged for. I'm trying to not let this overwhelm me. The YW are fun to work with and they have beautiful voices!

Steph was sustained yesterday as the ward YW president and she said she felt so overwhelmed by the time she left church yesterday that she didn't know if she could carry the load. The Lord surely gives us things to do that stretch our capacities. I guess the quote, "Man's extremities are God's opportunities" is true. Prayer is a wonderful resource for us all whether it is a church assignment or personal challenge.

[Dad] I am fighting a cold and felt really rummy all day yesterday. I enjoyed having some time off last week and being able to get a few things done around here. It really made a difference in the game room to get the ceiling painted, and we are excited to tie into the rest of the project and get that room carpeted but it will have to wait until after Christmas.

I also enjoyed getting the chimney and stove cleaned out and painted and ready for another season. We started a fire on Wednesday night

while we were downstairs watching a movie and set off both fire alarms.

Over the weekend I was able to read Orson Scott Card's, *Enchantment*. It was a thoroughly delightful book. I have been able to continue my exercise and diet regimen. With the pumpkin pie, banana cream pie, apple pie, cherry pie, and all the other good things to eat over Thanksgiving, then I lost a little ground, but I am still under 260 and losing. Sue does such a masterful job of feeding the multitudes—I know it is more work than miracles!

Our Orchestra concert is this week. SaraKay will be playing with her Middle School strings group and also a couple of numbers with the orchestra as a whole. The numbers we are playing are really difficult and high for the trumpets, but we do pretty well.

I wanted to share a couple thoughts from a talk by John Pepper, former CEO of Procter & Gamble. He quoted from Ronald Reagan: "The character that takes command in moments of crucial choices has already been determined by a thousand other choices made earlier at seemingly unimportant moments. It has been determined by all of the seemingly little choices of years past, by all those times when the voice of conscience was at war with the voice of temptation, whispering, aloud or internal, 'it doesn't really matter.'" Yes, it does matter—what we are is a composite of all the tiny decisions we make day by day, and what we are is much more important than what we do—we must be congruent—consistent in external actions with our internal standards and values."

He went on to tell about a story told by Norm Augustine that dramatizes the importance of trying to do what is right—consistently, constantly. Norm once felt that the boa made its kill by quickly crushing its victim in the powerful folds of its body. However, his look in the encyclopedia revealed instead that the boa places two or three coils of its body around the chest of its prey and each time the victim exhales its breath, the boa simply takes up the slack. After three or four breaths, there is no more slack. The prey quickly suffocates and is then swallowed by the boa. Norm went on to note, rather chillingly, that this deadly phenomenon of the victim becoming an unwitting accomplice in its own destruction is not confined to the world of reptiles. The boa we

have to face and overcome is following our ethical values—each lapse is another coil of the snake.

December 5, 2000

[Mom] The Sunday following Thanksgiving when Paul, Mike, and their roommate Steve attended my Sunday school class, I requested some suggestions from them on ways to improve my performance as a teacher. They gave me some ideas of things I could do to draw the class out more and I tried to implement some of those yesterday. I think I got better response from the class and that their suggestions were good ones. This calling has been a challenge and I have to keep reminding myself how many times I have entered a Gospel Doctrine class without reading any of the weekly assigned scriptures. It would be so wonderful if the class members would come prepared but I guess I am expecting too much to think that most of them will. I do have several "A" students who read the material and come prepared to participate and join in the discussion. I depend on them so much. Daddy tries to always have a ready hand if he can sense that no one else is going to respond and I've appreciated his support and understanding of the subject matter. Next year's course of study will be the D & C. This has been my least favorite book of scripture so I'm going to have to really work hard to bring it to life for myself as well as my class.

Mike received word from Iowa that he wasn't accepted nor rejected. He was not in the original 20 students chosen, but his application is on a waiting list to see if any of the original 20 decide to accept offers they have received elsewhere. If they do, his application is in the "under consideration" pile and he may still receive an acceptance letter. He hasn't heard from Creighton yet and is anxious to know if he will get accepted there. He has an interview with Case Western set up for March but he prefers Creighton to Case and hopes his decision will be made before his fly-back time comes.

Linds received word that he passed Questions #1 and #2 and on Friday he will be doing a phone interview with a member of the Doctorate Committee as he defends his Question #3. This is normal procedure and just another hoop that he has to jump through to meet the numerous standards for continuing with his degree. It is a monumental task and truly amazing that anyone

would persevere to the bitter end! If Linds wasn't so gifted in his field we would tell him to "bag it" (not that our advice matters) but we know how capable he is and that this goal is a worthy one so we continue to cheer him on!

Several of you have asked regarding David and Andrea. No word as yet regarding their home selling but they are planning on it taking a while and willing to wait. They will be arriving Christmas Day afternoon. John and Laurel will be coming the 23rd and Mike and Paul around the 16th. Steve and Bonnie are still in the planning stage and will probably come the week between Christmas and New Year's.

I am anxious to finish up my YW stake assignment. I wish I could say that it has been a totally awesome experience, but to be honest it has been very stressful and I have felt like I didn't have the expertise to do it. I have appreciated Daddy's patience with me as I have had many discouraging moments.

We learned in our Sunday School lesson yesterday that the Jaredites did everything they could to prepare for their journey to the promised land and that then they put themselves in the hands of the Lord and exercised their faith. I am trying to exercise my faith that the Lord will intervene where ever we fall short. It will be wonderful to have it completed and be able to turn my thoughts to Christmas. Whenever I feel overloaded like I have lately, I remind myself of all my blessings and I recommit to trying harder. I know I owe the Lord my best efforts.

[Dad] Last week I ended up taking a sick day because of the bad cold I had. After sleeping most of the morning and part of the afternoon I felt really good and was able to work the rest of the week. On Tuesday, I helped Robert clean out the downstairs and haul a bunch of outdated popcorn flyers and order forms to a recycler. We had over 2400 pounds of paper and received \$12.40 for our efforts. We also hauled away a couple of old copy machines that had been taking up space and just like Don Aslett says, it always feels good to get rid of junk that you have had hanging around—you actually feel lighter!

Wednesday and Thursday nights were big orchestra nights—dress rehearsal on Wednesday for our Christmas Concert on Thursday. We played some fun numbers, but very high and

difficult for the trumpets. After a long and intense practice, one day was not enough time for lip-recovery and we ran out of lip before we ran out of music. We covered up pretty well and made it through, but it wasn't as beautiful as I would have liked it. We were pleased with the crowd we had there. It was also nice to have SaraKay involved in the strings group from the middle school that played a couple numbers and then they joined the orchestra on the last two Christmas numbers.

I wanted to just share some lessons from a Marriott School of Business convocation address by Gary Baughman, retired president and CEO of Fisher Price, "I-Learn to work positively and productively with other people. (Technical, marketing, and computer skills are important-but in the end-people skills triumph!) 2-Learn to communicate effectively and persuasively with others, both orally and in writing. (Good listening skills are more important than a huge vocabulary or a silver tongue.) 3-Develop a passion for your work. (Passion leads to competence, and competence leads to opportunity.) 4-Don't be afraid to take a well-thought-out, calculated risk when you sense that the time is right. 5-Take every opportunity to develop friendships with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. (We have a unique opportunity and responsibility to be a light unto the world, but that is tough to do from inside a cultural or religious cocoon.)

December 12, 2000

[Mom] We just returned from our annual stake choir concert. Every ward had a choir and it was a thrill to hear the numbers. I love the music of Christmas! This past week for Dad's birthday we went to dinner and then attended a "Canadian Brass" concert at Ricks College. It is a group of five musicians who play trumpet, tuba, baritone, trombone, and French horn. I knew when we got the tickets that Daddy would love it but I was absolutely awed by the beauty of their music. It was a wonderful evening, made even more so by the fact that they played some of my Christmas favorites.

My YW Worldwide Celebration went better than I could have hoped for. The Lord really honored our efforts and the entire evening was a thrill, both for those of us who were performing and for the audience. I continue to receive

compliments, thank you notes, and congratulations from the YW and their parents.

I'm amazed at Dad and his commitment to eat right and keep his sugar levels low. He has dropped over 30 pounds and he bought some new levis that would show off his new figure.

[Dad] It was rewarding to be involved with the YW Worldwide Celebration in support of Sue and to share in that wonderful evening of expressions of love and testimony of the Savior in song and script. The voices of the young women as they sang were beautiful and sounded like angels. The spirit was there and many were touched. It was a thrill to see the written testimonies of so many of the young women and their leaders on posters on the wall in the cultural hall. I was besieged by parents and leaders expressing their appreciation for all Sue did to involve their daughters in such a wonderful spiritual event. She is an incredible recruiter and knew so many of the girls by name and made room for girls that hadn't even been to a practice to join the chorus. There must have been over 85 girls on the stand and there were so many that had talents with voice, violin, or flute that were able to be showcased by their involvement in the performance.

Wednesday I worked in Idaho Falls and that night I met Sue at Becky's and we went to a Chinese Buffet for dinner-what a challenge to eat at a place like that when you are on a diet! Then we drove through the fog to Rexburg and enjoyed the Canadian Brass concert. They were incredible artists and I felt like I was transported on the notes of their music to some heavenly place. There was a beautiful mural of the Spori building in winter as a backdrop with lighting and effects that enhanced the program. The Spori building has been the administration building for Ricks forever. I remember going in there to look up the class schedule of a Susan Richards so I could cross her path at appropriate times, going there with Sue to review and sign purchase orders for class and school activities while she was Finance VP and I was Sophomore class president. It's being torn down and replaced. A couple of weeks ago, as the contractors began demolishing it, sparks from a cable started a fire and it burned all the inside and roof-contrary to plan.

Thursday at work we celebrated my birthday party with a carrot cake and ice cream.

Thursday night, Friday, and Saturday I touched base with almost all my wonderful children as you called and remembered the 17th anniversary of my fortieth birthday. Thanks to each of you for your calls, cards, and tokens of remembrance.

Saturday was one of the first times I remember being free enough to help Sue with some candy making. As we put together some of the best pecan logs we have ever done I couldn't help but think how fun it was to be working together much more than we have been able to in the past. I sure love your mother and would do anything to enjoy her company, work together, share her burdens and vice versa. I appreciate the love and respect each of you show her!

We also went to Pocatello to an open house of one of my work associates. Then we had SaraKay's Jazz BB game. Her team was finally able to run the plays they had been working on all year and to score over 30 points to win their second game of the season. After that we rushed out to the ward Christmas party which was a talent show. SaraKay sang with three other girls "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" and played her violin for another number. It is gratifying to have her developing and using her talents. I also played a trumpet solo representing the High Priests. Most of the other numbers on the program were humorous like the Eider's parody of "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

December 17, 2000

[Mike] Paul and I finished up finals on Friday and celebrated by going to play basketball with a group from our ward. Afterwards, he went with Jenny to see the Nutcracker while I watched the edited version of The Matrix. It appears one of us is a bit more cultured than the other, but he wouldn't heed my invitation for an evening of refined entertainment.

Jenny has been a major part of the picture lately. She took off with Paul and I on Saturday to Logan where we helped Steve and Dad build Steve's storage room. I'm sure that Bonnie and Mom loved having the opportunity to get to know Jenny as we "men" played with power tools in the basement.

We got back to Blackfoot just in time for SaraKay's final Jazz basketball game. It was

pretty intense, and even though their team lost, SaraKay scored twice. She made us proud.

Sunday night was the annual Larsen Christmas party--always a gala affair. We ate, had a small program, and exchanged gifts. Grandpa and Grandma gave each family an amazing nativity set made out of olive wood from the Holy Land.

Mom and I have had a jolly time making candy and Christmas shopping. The car situation has been crazy since Paul took Mom's to Utah to visit Jenny's family and mine is supposed to be in the shop. The last few weeks in Provo my car has been spewing smoke from the engine, but we made the trip to Idaho despite the evident problems with my engine so that Ron Mangum could check it out over the holiday.

Remember when we were younger and while watching a nice show on TV, the second Mom or Dad would come down the stairs suddenly there would be a lot of swearing or some other distasteful scene? It's been the opposite with my car situation. For weeks, a smelly smoke has curled up from under the hood of my Hyundai whenever I drove a few blocks. The second I got my car home, the strange smoke stopped. Don't get me wrong, I would be thrilled if my car were ok, but I can't help thinking Ron is rolling his eyes as the boy-who-cried-smoke shows up at the shop with a car that runs fine.

[Mom] Tim called Tuesday night to schedule his Christmas phone call home. Mike was the one who answered the phone and he said that Tim sounded great!

It has been fun having Mike around the last few days to help me finish up Christmas preparations. He has been chauffeuring me around since my white Pontiac has gone "a' courting" to Bountiful, Utah. We are excited to get Paul home and find out what's going on. We met Jenny and were impressed with her and as Chet would say, "and what she brings to the table".

Anyway, Paul will be home tonight and fill us in. We are looking forward to having John and Laurel and David and Andrea and families here for Christmas. Becky and Chet are hosting his family but we hope to have a game night during the holidays and have them join us for that. As the holiday draws near I have thought about Christmases past and how much more pleasant they are now than they were then. Daddy has put away a little savings each month so that we

can have what we need when December arrives and it has made my job so much easier. I appreciate all he does to provide for our family and the sacrifices he makes so that we can have the things that we need and more.

For those of you who will not be coming home, we will miss you and pray that you have some special friends who you can share the holiday with. Know that we love you and pray for the Lord's choicest blessings to be with you and yours. Have a Merry Christmas! Love, Mom

[Dad] Last week when we headed to Utah on Friday afternoon, we stopped at the bank to make a deposit and the teller asked if I was headed out of town and then commented that some of the roads were being closed because of the storm. We were fortunate to not have any road closures, but just south of McCammon there was a strip where the ice was really bad on the road and we saw three semi's off the road, a delivery truck and about eight other cars. The visibility at times was very limited, but we were able to make it to Wellsville without incident.

Working with Steve to plan, buy materials, and build their storage room and shelves was a sweet experience. I remember being so impatient when I was younger that I would rather do it myself than try to teach you kids and I am sorry for it. Now I know what is most important and it isn't the project being done my way. As we were getting the materials Steve confided that he sometimes feels like a nerd because he can't do any of the manly things his neighbors in construction can do. I assured him that he just needed a little experience and that he was intelligent enough to be able to do anything they could do- maybe not as fast or as perfect because of their training and experience. Sure enough, after watching him catch on to the sheet rocking and putting together the shelves for their storage area I think he can be justifiably proud of himself. (We tried to make sure their neighbors saw us hauling building materials into the basement)

December 27, 2000

[Dad] One of the highlights of this last week was being able to talk to Tim on Sunday at 1:30. He sounded so good and it was such a thrill to talk to him in person. Each of the kids that were here took about 3 ½ or 4 minutes, then Sue and I each took about 20 minutes apiece. Paul

talked to him in Spanish and said it was totally comfortable and it seemed really natural. Tim started to talk to SaraKay in Spanish, but she had to stop him and remind him that English only was required for her. When I talked to him and asked about his language, he told me that while at the MTC and ever since he had arrived in the mission, he had filled every minute with trying to learn the language. He even had 3 x 5 cards he studied while riding his bike or walking. He was getting discouraged that it wasn't coming together for him and about three weeks ago he fasted and prayed that he would be able to start speaking with greater fluency. After concluding his fast and talking with the Lord about how he had given his all in studying and trying to perfect the language and seeking for his help, he went out on team teaching with a member of the branch. During the discussion he realized that he had been speaking and teaching without his usual struggle with the language. And it has been like that ever since. What a testimony of the power of hard work and faith and how man's extremity is God's opportunity.

It has really been fun to have many of the kids join us for Christmas. Paul and Mike were here, John, Laurel, Emma, and James arrived on Saturday. David, Andrea, Laurel, Angela, and Joseph arrived Monday night about 6:30. We have also had some good time with Jennie and think the world of her. Things are looking pretty good for Paul and her getting together. I think they really care for each other. He was looking for a Calvin & Hobbes book for her and we suggested that he ought to use his money to buy her a ring for Christmas instead.

Dave, Mike, Paul and I went car shopping for Mike on Tuesday afternoon. It was fun to do it together and let Dave teach us all the techniques he knows. We saw some interesting cars and after doing the research we have done in the field, on the computer, and through Steve's Consumer Reports, I think Mike feels more comfortable as to where he is going with this whole process.

Christmas was a wonderful day- it is always fun to have small children opening gifts and sharing in their excitement. We have listened to " Little People making lots of plans..." about 5,329 times since Christmas morning. Thanks to each of you for your calls, cards, gifts, and thoughts.

Christmas night we had a nice dinner with everyone here and Chet and his mother, Dot, Becky, Madison, and Tate joined us. We have had lots of good conversation time, some wild games and spiritual times as well. Last night we talked Laurel into dancing for us and then we ended up with all of us dancing around downstairs. It was fun to watch SaraKay dancing with Mike and David, Joseph and Angela dancing with Jennie and Paul, etc. We had such a fun time that we decided we need a dancing time at our next family reunion.

For the Sunday Christmas program, we had a wonderful choir program with testimonies of the Savior and beautiful music. Our choir is awesome!!! It was fun to have Paul and Mike join together on one of the solos for "We Three Kings." I sang one also and received some sweet compliments. We had many members dropping by over the weekend with gifts of food and goodies. We also shared goodies with our neighbors and special people in our lives. One of the people we took a plate to was Keith Clark, Marcela's husband and a recent widower, and had a sweet visit with him. It is interesting to observe the softening of hearts when death, trials, and such life experiences happen.

I had better get this in the mail. I don't think Sue is going to have time to add anything this week. She has been going 90 miles an hour for the last couple of weeks getting everything done for Christmas, planning, shopping, delivering, cooking, serving, washing, and everything. I hope she doesn't collapse when the kids leave to go back to school. Love, DAD